

The
Blessed
Life

N.J. HOFMEYR

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THE BLESSED LIFE:

HOW TO FIND AND LIVE IT,

To the many readers of Hannah Whitall Smith's "Christian's Secret of a Happy Life" and Andrew Murray's devotional books this volume, exhalng the spirit of love for Christ, will be heartily welcomed. As Andrew Murray in far off Cape of Good Hope sent to an anxious world such loving tributes of a dying Saviour, so Professor Hofmeyr, amidst the toils that surrounded him, found time at the end of each revolving day to erect "landmarks on the sands of time," by observing which we might be guided to "The Blessed Life."

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"The teaching is sound throughout, and expressed in vigorous language. We are sure the work will prove helpful to earnest seekers after 'The Blessed Life.'"—*Christian*.

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THE BLESSED LIFE:

How to find and Live it.

BY

N. J. HOFMEYR,

SENIOR PROFESSOR OF THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE DUTCH
REFORMED CHURCH, STELLENBOSCH, CAPE COLONY.

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PREFACE.

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SINCE the establishment of this college I have been in the habit of meeting the students once a week unofficially for exhortation and prayer.¹ Some time ago I availed myself of this opportunity to address them on the subject of man's "returning to the Father," "surrendering to the Son," and "walking by the Spirit." These addresses were in substance published in Dutch, the language in which they were delivered. I first intended having them translated into English, but subsequently thought

¹ This Theological College, which was opened at Stellenbosch, near Cape Town, in 1859 with two professors and four students. now numbers three professors and thirty-four students. It was established by the original colonial Church, which is named "The Dutch Reformed Church," after the mother Church in Holland, and is by far the largest religious body in South Africa. Previous to the existence of this college, our colonial young men who were desirous of entering the ministry of this Church had to be prepared at one of the universities in Holland.

it preferable to write a new series of addresses on the same subject in English. These I now offer to the reader. It is my first attempt in English authorship.

The Scripture quotations are not always from the Authorized Version ; often the Revised Version has been preferred ; occasionally my own translation has been given.

To my heavenly Father I commit this endeavour to show others how to find and live the blessed life, which we owe to the mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

N. J. HOFMEYR.

STELLENBOSCH, CAPE COLONY,

June 1890.

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PART I.

ON RETURNING TO THE FATHER

I.

CONVERSION EXPLAINED.

“Sinners shall return unto Thee.”—Ps. li. 13.

IT is of the utmost importance that you should clearly understand *what* is meant by “returning to God.”

In calling you to return to Himself, God desires you to return to the filial position you have forsaken by sin. God has not lost His paternal affection towards you. He shows it in the various ways in which He ordains and permits His creatures to minister to your comfort, and especially by the gift of His Son, through whom He saves the lost. But His fatherly affection is hidden to you. Sin evoked God’s wrath; and the sense of His wrath prevents in you the sense of His fatherly love. Unless you are released from the bondage of sin and the corresponding sense of God’s wrath, God’s fatherly love must remain hidden to you. In order to obtain this release, you must return to the original attitude of a child towards God

God's Fatherhood can only be understood by the filial heart. The beatings of the paternal heart can only be perceived when you are conscious of the responsive beatings of the filial heart. As you know God's judicial severity by a sense of His wrath, so you can only know His fatherly kindness by a sense of His love. In order to obtain this sense of God's paternal love, you must be restored to your filial position. For this purpose God invites you to return to Him.

This returning is an act of the will. It is not an act which *originates* with your will. It is due to a divine impulse communicated to your will. Still it is essentially an act of the will. You may understand the necessity and feel the desirability of returning to God; but unless you *will* it, you can never *act* it: you can only *act* it by *willing* it.

Now, the nature of the will is such that it cannot be *forced* to do what you know and feel to be right. It must be moved in the right direction by a power to which it voluntarily yields. For this reason God *entreats* and *persuades* men to return to Him.¹ Grace triumphs over sin by rousing man to listen to God's invitation, and making him *willing* to yield to it. God does not move the will without enlightening the mind and touching the heart; but it is through the will that you return to God, irrespective of the measure of knowledge and emotion you may have. Where there is the willingness to

¹ 2 Cor. v. 20.

return to God, there men do it, even though they have but little knowledge and feeling ; but where this willingness is wanting, men refuse to return to God, even though they may clearly see and deeply feel the necessity of doing it.

Should you feel willing to return to God, then do it, without waiting for more light and feeling. They will follow, and grow with the growth of the filial life. Let God but enter into the possession of your will, and He will thence, as from the seat of His regal power, control both your intellectual and emotional life.

Let your return to God be an act of obedience. Let it be the surrender of your will to God's will. Because man's return is acted by the will, it is essentially an act of obedience. A life of true obedience to God begins with man's return to God, and for ever flows from it.

Whatever you may do to please God, you are sure to displease Him as long as you refuse to return to Him. Your whole life bears the stamp of disobedience ; and nothing can efface this stamp but the act of returning to God. However religious you may appear to yourself and others, if your religion does not issue from a heart which has returned to God for pardon and reconciliation, God looks down upon you as upon a rebel, and must treat you as such. He must withhold from you the peace and joy, which reflect the love, with which He embraces His obedient child.

But whence the obedience shown by the will in returning to God? It is born of trust. This makes the act of returning emphatically *an act of trust*. The slave obeys his master, though he should ever so much distrust him, because he is compelled to do so. But when God calls you to return to His fatherly love, you can only obey this call by trusting His love. Only trust can move you to receive divine pardon and adoption. As God's invitation to return emphatically emanates from His love, so your accepting this invitation must emphatically be born of trust in His love. Only by trusting God's ineffable love can the sinner return to God.

Sin-convicted soul, I know you are afraid of drawing nigh to God, because your conscience only reflects the wrath of God called forth by sin. But turn your ear away from yourself, and listen to God's loving call, until it re-echoes within you in all its divine tenderness. He so loved you that He gave His own Son to die for you and expiate your guilt. For years He kept on knocking at your heart, that He might enter it, and win it back to a life of filial trust. Open the door. Trust His love. Receive love's pardon and adoption.

By this definite act of trust you recommence the lost filial life. The great delusion under which sinful man labours is, that he is to regain his lost peace by effacing his guilt and bringing God back to him, through meritorious works and sacrifices.

This delusion prevails among Heathen and Mohamedans, Jews and Christians. In seeking peace, they trust not to God, but to themselves; not to what *He* has done for their salvation, but to what *they* have to do in order to save themselves. They reverse the order, and instead of being moved by God to return to *Him*, they want to move God to return to *them*. With them it is not, "God reconciling the world to Himself" by the sacrifice of His Son, but "the world reconciling God to itself" by its worthy deeds and offerings.

As long as you try to regain God's favour by your good intentions and acts, by your penitential feelings and exercises, you show that you are trusting self and distrusting God, who offers you not only a free pardon, but also the regeneration of your heart by His Spirit. Give up these fruitless endeavours. Despair of self, and trust God. The act of trusting God for pardon and life, is the act of returning to God.

The history of sin began with an act of distrust in God's fatherly love, and so the story of your deliverance from the power of sin must commence with an act of trust in the Father's forgiving and restoring love. John the Baptist called upon sinners to change their minds towards God, by trusting God for pardon and the gift of the Spirit.¹ Their godly walk was not to *precede*, but to *follow* this change of mind; it was not to be its *root*, but

¹ Luke iii. 3, 16.

its *fruit*.¹ So the new life of the prodigal son was the fruit of his trust in his father's forgiving love. First, pardon and adoption; then, by God's indwelling Spirit, the life of filial obedience. This life transcends the best life of the unconverted as much as the life of the prodigal son, since his return to his father, transcended the self-righteous life of the elder brother.

Are you convinced of your guilt and alienation from God? Is your heart crying out for pardon and reconciliation, and for a new life? Have you failed to obtain these blessings by your own doings? Are you drifting farther and farther away from God? Then give up trying, and by an act of trusting return to God, that He may forgive you, restore you to your filial position, and enable you to live the life of filial obedience.

NOTE.

The Hebrew *shûb*, which means "to turn," "to turn back," is constantly used by the 'prophets when they call upon Israel to turn from their evil ways to God. There can be no reasonable doubt that John the Baptist, Christ, and His apostles used this expression when they addressed the

¹ Luke iii. 8.

Jews in Hebrew, and called upon them to forsake their evil ways and return to God.

The literal translation of *shûb* in Greek is *epistrephein*. We find this word in Acts ix. 35, where it is said that the inhabitants of Lydda and Saron *turned* to the Lord; and in Acts xi. 21, where we read that many in Antioch believed and *turned* unto the Lord. Compare Acts xiv. 15, xv. 19, xxvi. 18, 20, xxviii. 27; 2 Cor. iii. 16; 1 Thess. i. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 25.

When, however, the apostles spoke or wrote to foreigners in Greek, they preferred, as a rule, the word *metanoein*, because it was better fitted to convey the meaning of the Hebrew *shûb*. It means, just as *shûb*, "to change the mind," or "to turn the mind," to a different course or purpose,—"to turn the mind from all evil ways to God." Luke exchanges *epistrophe* (turning) in Acts xv. 3, for *metanoia* (turning the mind) in Acts xi. 18, *while telling the same thing*. Twice he joins *epistrephein* to *metanoein*, in order to explain the one by the other, but not to express two different things; just as *sign* and *wonder*, when they occur together, do not mean two different things (Acts iii. 19, xxvi. 18).

John constructs *metanoein* with *from*, just as *shûb* is constructed with *from*, because he attaches the same meaning to *metanoein* as to *shûb*. I refer to Rev. ii. 22 and ix. 21, where he speaks of *changing* (or turning) *one's mind from* one's deeds,

and *from* murders and other evil practices. So Heb. vi. 1 speaks of "the change of mind (the turning of the mind) *from* dead works."

Luther, led astray by the Latin Vulgate, translated *metanoein* by "*doing penance*."

The English Version renders it by "*repent*," and *metanoia* by "*repentance*," which is not correct. The Greek word for repent is *metamelesthai*, and is found in Matt. xxi. 29, 32, xxvii. 3; 2 Cor. vii. 8; Heb. vii. 21. If the apostles had intended to convey the idea of *repentance*, they would have used *metamelesthai*, and not *metanoein*.

The Dutch Version correctly, though not literally, translates *metanoein* and *metanoia* by "*to turn*" and "*turning*," or "*conversion*" (which is from the Latin *conversio*, "*turning*").

The parable of the prodigal son, which describes the sinner's *metanoia*, expatiates on *the act of turning back* (the conversion) of the prodigal son.

Another proof that the Greek *metanoein* stands for the Hebrew *shûb*, is the fact that both are united to *pardon*. See Isa. lv. 7; Mark i. 4; Luke xxiv. 47.

II.

THE UNCONVERTED DESCRIBED.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord."—ISA. lv. 7.

How can you know whether the call to return to God applies to *your* case ? Let conscience speak. *You are a religious person* ; but is your religion the result of pardon and adoption ? Do you serve God with the happy assurance of forgiveness, and in a filial spirit ? One may be very religious, and yet quite a stranger to the religion which binds God and man together as Father and child. Is not *your* religion of such a character ? You adhere to religious forms, but they hide the Father's face from you. You confess religious dogmas, but they are not quickening truths to you. They are mere formulas learnt by heart.

Such a religious life and orthodox confession may even go hand in hand with many a sinful practice.

Should conscience admit that yours is such a lifeless and unfruitful religion, then attend to God's gracious call and return to Him.

But you say, you do not care about religion. *It is not a religious, but a moral life you strive after.* Whence this dislike of religion? Perhaps you are surrounded by religious people who are a stumbling-block to you: they are narrow, uncharitable, self-complacent, defective in temper and conduct. If they have not caused, yet they have strengthened your dislike to and disbelief in religion.

Fortunately, you have not discarded morality along with religion, although you are in daily contact with those whose moral profession is at variance with their base and dishonest practices. In spite of the low maxims and actions of many who surround you, you believe in the ideal of a moral life, feel attracted by it, and aim at realizing it in your conduct.

But you must confess that the deeper your moral views and convictions are, the less you feel enabled to conform to them in your daily life. Why is it? You lack true religion, which is the feeder of a truly moral life. Christ was the perfectly religious as well as the perfectly moral man. His life had two aspects. Towards God it manifested perfect love to the Father; towards man it manifested perfect love to the brethren. His morality was the visible human garb of the invisible divine life. He perfectly loved man, because He perfectly loved God.

You admire Christ as the best of men. Then

follow Christ, by striving after a moral life which has its root in love to God. Love God and you will, like Christ, love your fellow-men. But this love to God is only born of a sense of His loving pardon.¹ Return to Him, confess your sin, and receive His free pardon.

But you say that you are neither the religious nor the moral man I have described. *You have cast off all restraints, both moral and religious.* You stifle your moral and religious convictions, give the reins to your evil passions, serve your carnal lusts. In you the spiritual yields to the material, the human to the bestial, the divine to the satanic.

And yet, God has not forsaken you. Through your conscience He speaks to you, condemning your conduct, and awakening forebodings of coming doom. Amid your most sinful pleasures, conscience echoes God's warning. It opens to you a vista through which you behold the coming Judge. It makes you tremble, as Belshazzar did when he saw the mysterious hand writing his sentence on the very walls which witnessed his impious revelry.

Thank God for these alarming voices and visions, since gentler voices and visions failed to lure you back to Him. His is a holy wrath. It is not a weak passion, but a divine affection, harmonizing with all His divine attributes. It does not destroy

¹ Luke vii. 47 ; 1 John iv. 11, 19.

His mercy; nay, if you give heed to it, it points you to His mercy, and prepares you for His merciful interference.

Therefore, do not harden yourself against conscience, as it reflects God's righteous anger; but confess that you have deserved being given over by God to darkness and despair; listen to His gracious call, and return to Him for pardon and reconciliation. Hear and accept His invitation: "Come now and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be as red like crimson, they shall be as wool."¹

But you may be entirely different from those whom I have described. You do not practise religion in a self-righteous spirit, nor replace it by a moral life, nor discard both religion and morality. On the contrary, you feel the need of pardon, and desire to live as one who is actuated by love both to God and man. You earnestly seek this double blessing, but cannot find it; and *you are unhappy because you cannot find what you seek.*

How have you sought the needed blessing? By reading your Bible, attending public worship, praying, meditating, seeking religious intercourse, doing good works. Here is your mistake. The act of returning to God is to *precede*, not to *follow* these religious exercises. They may stimulate in you the desire after real life, but cannot produce it. They may become the channels through which life flows, but

¹ Isa. i. 18.

never its source. God Himself is, in Christ, the immediate source of the life which alone can satisfy the deep cravings of your heart. But while it is thirsting after God, you pass Him by, and seek life where it is not to be found. Turn back to God. Just as others have to turn away from their *sins* to God, so you have to turn away from your *religious exercises* to God. First return to Him, accept His pardon, and allow Him by His Spirit to dwell in you ; and He will Himself be in you the source of the life you seek, and make the religious exercises to which His Spirit prompts you the *manifestations* of the hidden life He imparts to you. He will fulfil to you the word of Christ : " If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. The water that I shall give you shall be in you a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."¹

Whatever your special case or condition may be, should you feel the need of real spiritual life, then despair of obtaining it by your own efforts. It is an absolutely free gift, included in the absolutely free pardon which God bestows upon every one who returns to Him, as a guilty child to a compassionate father. " Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near : let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts : and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him ; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."²

¹ John vii. 37, 38, iv. 14.

² Isa. lv. 6, 7.

III.

DIVINE PARDON.

“The blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth from all sin.”—1 JOHN i. 7.

THOSE who on the day of Pentecost felt the need of pardon, especially for the guilt incurred by rejecting Christ, were told that they should be baptized, *relying on the name of Christ for the remission of sins.*¹ They understood what this meant, namely, that Christ was exalted to impart to all who would accept Him as Christ and Lord, not only the gift of the Spirit, but also the gift of pardon.² While submitting to baptism, they did not rely upon some mysterious action of the baptismal water upon their guilty souls, but upon Christ's intercessory action at the right hand of God. Just as a few days later the name of Christ, through faith in that name, healed the cripple; so through faith in that name the guilty obtained pardon.³

On that day they received no instruction about the essential connection between the death of

¹ Acts ii. 38.

² Acts ii. 38.

³ Acts iii. 16.

Christ and His intercession for the sinner. They were taught to look at the glorified Christ and to trust Him. By doing this, they were relieved from the crushing sense of unpardoned sin, and felt overshadowed by the pardoning love of God.

You have to follow their example. In returning to God, at once commit yourself to Christ. It is only after knowing Christ as your Saviour that the right interest is awakened in the divine plan of salvation, and that God's Spirit, through His word, shows you the deep thoughts of God underlying this plan.¹

There is no profounder truth to the contemplation of which we can be drawn by the Spirit of God, than that the manner in which God pardons reveals His righteousness as much as His love; and that this is due to the special connection between Christ's death and the remission of our sins. You cannot separate your pardon from the atoning² character of Christ's death. This is part of the peculiar glory of the gospel, and has shared the fate of all peculiar gospel truths: while gratefully and adoringly accepted by some, it is haughtily and spitefully rejected by others.

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 10.

² *A-tone* (Dutch *ver-zoenen*) means *expiate*, not *unite*, as if you read *at-one*. *Tone* here is the same as the Dutch *zoenen* and the German *sühnen*, the *z* being changed into *t*, as in the verb *tame*, of which the Dutch is *temmen* and the German *zähmen*. The *a* prefixed to *tone* is the intensive prefix, as *a* in *a-bide* (Dutch *ver-beiden*).

Let us reverently enter into this matter. God has enlightened you clearly to see that the misery entailed by sin is of a peculiar character; that you, as a sinner, do not suffer as an *unfortunate*, but as a *guilty* person. If sin were only a misfortune, it would only evoke God's pity; but since it is mainly a crime, it especially awakens God's wrath. Without pity God would not be a loving God; without wrath He would not be a righteous God.

Why does sin separate you from God? Not because it is a misfortune, for man's misfortune draws the loving God nearer to him; but because it is a crime, for whatever is criminal excites the resentment of the righteous God. A sense of guilt is inseparable from a sense of God's wrath, and a sense of God's wrath is inseparable from a sense of separation from God. Now, suppose God would pardon you without having regard to sin as a crime, and to His own righteous wrath awakened by this crime, would He not thereby ignore both the nature of sin and His own character? Your awakened conscience, reflecting and interpreting God's righteousness, could never acquiesce in such a pardon; it would condemn a God who thus pardons as a Being who, for pity's sake, acts arbitrarily and unrighteously.

Is not the judge among men called to punish the criminal? Why? Because he is called to uphold the majesty of the law, which has been violated by the culprit. Suppose he should, for pity's sake, pardon the unfortunate criminal, would he not

thereby renounce his duty, and be the cause of the law being robbed of its majesty? How, then, can the Supreme Judge pardon the sinner merely for pity's sake? Such a pardon would rob God of His majesty, and deprive Him of the respect due to a righteous God. As little as we can bear the thought that God's pity should be kept in abeyance by His righteous wrath, can we bear the thought that His righteous wrath should be kept in abeyance by His pity. We could not love such a God, because we cannot love a God whom we cease to reverence. The worship of such a God would not elevate, but degrade. It would be no worship.

What did you experience when the Holy Spirit drew you near to God in order to seek His pardon? You had a deep sense of His righteousness. You sought His pardon, while humbling yourself as a condemned criminal in the presence of his judge. God's Spirit, while urging you to accept divine pardon, did not hide from you, but revealed to you, the majesty of God's righteousness. The sense of God's righteousness became the basis upon which the Spirit continued His work while revealing to you God's mercy. He indelibly impressed you with the sense that it is a righteous God who pardons. The righteousness of God was displayed in its full lustre at the very moment when He showed you His ineffable pity and spoke pardon to your soul.

This wonderful experience reflects the history of man's redemption through the blood of Christ. In

a remarkable manner this history was foreshadowed both among the heathen and the Israelites. They drew near to God, while suing for pardon, as to the righteous Judge. The moment in which God's merciful pardon was proclaimed to them was at the same time the moment in which God's awful righteousness was displayed by the death inflicted upon the victim, which represented the guilty sinner. The pardon obtained by the sinner was stamped with the mark of God's righteousness. It was received, not from a weak and indulgent, but a sternly righteous God. It was such that the awakened conscience could acquiesce in it. It was a divine pardon.

The ignorant heathen did not understand this method of redemption. He had lost sight of the truth that God was the sole cause and the prime mover in this matter, and imagined that man, by offering a sacrifice for his sins, had to change a relentless into a pitying God. His conceptions, both of God's wrath and God's mercy, were utterly unworthy of God.

The Israelite was taught better. He knew that as God in His mercy had delivered him from Egypt, so in His mercy He had shown him how to obtain a pardon which is as free as it is holy. This prepared him to understand the grand truth that Christ died for us, as the Father's gift to us;¹ that Christ, while manifesting the wrath of God, at the same time manifested the mercy of God, which, by

¹ Heb. viii., ix., x.

the death of His Son, provided a pardon for us, approved of by the human conscience, and worthy of a holy God.

Christ knew that His death would stand out unique above every other death, because He knew that He would die for the remission of our sins.¹ And it was especially in view of this atoning death that He said: "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son."² The Father was not moved by the death of His Son to pity us; but moved by pity, He gave His Son to die for us. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."³ The Son acted in His love for us as He was moved by the Father's love towards us. The *Father* was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.⁴

While thus, on the one hand, we are not to imagine that Christ had to move His Father to pity us; we are, on the other hand, to avoid the error which denies that Christ's death was the righteous and holy path through which God's pardon had to become the righteous and holy gift which it now is. In Christ's death we see God's justice and mercy harmonized in a manner which could only have originated in the divine mind. Though at once assented to by the enlightened conscience, it infinitely transcends all human anticipation. Such a

¹ Matt. xx. 28, xxvi. 27, 28.

² John iii. 16.

³ 1 John iv. 9; 10.

⁴ 2 Cor. v. 19.

display of God's perfection as it presents was never seen before, and can never be seen again. Throughout all eternity it will be adoringly contemplated as the unique event in the history of man's redemption.

Let us more closely look into its meaning.

I know of no more terrible law of God's punitive justice than that a child, by reason of his union with his father, should suffer the consequences of the father's misconduct. Think of a drunkard's child. So the human race suffers from its connection with Adam. Christ, though on His own account not deserving of death, was subject to this law, because by His incarnation He had become one with the guilty race. When in Gethsemane He saw the portals of death opening, He was overcome by an inexpressible agony at the approach of death. He then had to choose between these two: either to claim, as His personal right, exemption from death, or to have His union with the human race perfected by submitting to death. His love for us moved Him to choose the latter.¹ It was the path of obedience to the Father, whose will it was that His Son should sacrifice His own interests to those of His fellow-descendants from Adam. And so at last the Father allowed His Son inwardly to experience on the cross the darkness of death, and thus to lose for three hours the sense of His loving nearness. No created mind will ever

¹ Phil. ii. 8 ; Rom. v. 19 ; Heb. v. 8.

be enabled to fathom the infinite depth into which God's Son then sank. His Father again raised Him from the bottomless pit. But throughout all eternity He will bear the marks of that awful death, and so remind all who behold Him of God's awful righteousness.

But mark, just before He was overshadowed by the darkness of death, He most fully revealed His oneness with God. While suffering from human sin the utmost He could bear, He had an insight in its criminality as never before. But did He invoke God's righteous interference? No; for this would have saved Him at the cost of man's irreparable ruin. Forgetting His own interests, He felt man's guilt more than ever, and prayed more compassionately than ever: "Father, forgive them!" This prayer was answered, but at the cost of that awful gloom which was about to spread over His dying soul. *But what a love He revealed, pointing to His oneness with the Infinite Love!* This intercessory act at this supreme moment marked Him as the One Sacrifice and the One Intercessor between God and man. As such He is now seated at the Father's right hand. There you recognise in Him a love which passed through an ordeal which no creature could have stood.

I think you now in some measure understand what it means to receive pardon in the name of Jesus Christ. He made this pardon a holy and righteous gift. He obtained it for us in a holy and

righteous manner. Coming to us through Him, it is stamped with God's righteousness as much as with God's mercy. It is thoroughly worthy of God, tunes our heart to the right worship of Him, fills us with both love and awe towards Him and Christ.

IV.

PREPARATORY FAITH.

“What, therefore, ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you.”—ACTS xvii. 23.

THE faith by which we obtain pardon and are restored to our original relation to God, is the faith by which we return to God and intrust ourselves to Him, as to the Father who has revealed Himself to us as our Saviour through His Son Jesus Christ. This faith is pre-eminently worthy to be called *saving* faith, not because of any excellence inherent in it, but because of the perfect salvation of which it takes hold. There is no higher act of faith than the receiving of the full salvation which God offers us through Jesus Christ. For this faith God has prepared man during the many ages which preceded the present gospel dispensation. Even the heathen were being prepared for it. Just as in Israel the law and the prophets pointed to the gospel and prepared the Jew for its acceptance, so there was a religious faith, however imperfect and distorted,

among the heathen, which tended to keep open a door of entrance for the gospel. Let us call this a *preparatory* faith.

Just as Paul, when preaching to the Jews, appealed to Moses and the prophets, so, when preaching to the Gentiles, he appealed to this preparatory faith. He interpreted to them the deeper workings of this faith, and pointed them to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as the only object which can satisfy the religious cravings awakened by it.¹

We call this preparatory faith an *instinctive* faith, that is, a faith which is naturally evoked as soon as the religious side of man's nature is turned towards the truths, which are presupposed by human nature as God has created it. So man *instinctively* believes certain moral truths as soon as the moral side of his nature is turned towards the truths, which are presupposed by the moral constitution of man.

Is saving faith the natural development of this preparatory faith? By no means. The latter points to the former as earth points to heaven; but it cannot by its inherent power reach the high region to which it points. It must be lifted to that region by a new heavenly power, and so be regenerated into a new, a spiritual faith, which heals the existing breach between God and man, and makes the religious life to depend upon God's indwelling Spirit. Though the Israelites were far

¹ Acts xvii. 26-30.

in advance of the heathen, though God through His word had kept them from the gross darkness which prevailed among the Gentiles, yet they needed as much as these the converting and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit in order to be saved by God through Christ. Because there was no inherent power in the faith which distinguished the Jew from the Gentile, to lift man into the kingdom of God, therefore the Gentile was not required to become first a Jew and then a Christian. As to man's lost condition and the need of divine deliverance, there was no difference between Jew and Gentile.¹

However, though this preparatory faith does not by its own virtue lead man into God's kingdom, yet it points to it, and is intended by God to prepare him for the gospel of the kingdom. It is an alarming fact that at the present day there is a largely increasing number of those who, though surrounded by Christian influences, have sunk beneath the heathen. These could not live without religion; they felt the need of it, and held fast to many truths which are found at the foundation of religion; but these modern unbelievers look upon all religious truth as a delusion, which must necessarily be dissolved by the light of science. Having turned the inner eye away from the truth, they have lost the capacity of seeing it; and because they do not see it, they assert that it does not exist,

¹ Rom. iii. 9, 19.

and pity those who still believe what Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles believed.

Must we give them up as irrecoverably lost? By no means! Just as God saved the heathen, though wanting the faith which existed in Israel, so He is mighty to save those who have no preparatory faith at all, and are in this respect sunk beneath the heathen, who sought for the unknown God to satisfy their religious cravings.

Dear reader, should there be no *saving* faith in you, then I suppose you are not devoid of a *preparatory* faith. Let me analyse it.

You instinctively perceive *not only that God is, but also that He is the cause of all created life*.¹ You instinctively rest upon this as upon an ultimate truth. It is to you a final answer to the question: whence this beautiful world? Because the ancient philosophers knew not this truth, they could not rest satisfied with the various answers they themselves gave to this question. But, having been told this truth, you at once see its reasonableness, and believe it. God, in revealing Himself to man as his Saviour, presupposes this truth. Only man's Creator can be man's Saviour.

You instinctively perceive *that there is a peculiar relation between God and man*; that God is not shut out from the sphere of your life, nor you from the sphere of God's life; that God created you for a definite purpose, which you cannot work out

¹ Heb. xi. 3.

without Him. The heathen felt this relation, and when some of them called man God's offspring, they were nearer the truth than they themselves were aware of.¹ You have heard the full truth. You have been told that man is created by God, with the high purpose of knowing, loving, and obeying Him as his Father. You instinctively assent to this truth. It is the key explaining the deep aspirations of the soul after a life of intimate union with God. God presupposes this truth when He offers you, not only pardon, but also the Spirit of adoption. If God had not created man with the high purpose of becoming His son, man would have felt out of place in this position; and the word, holding forth to him the blessing of sonship, would be to him no gospel, no good news.

You instinctively perceive *that sin is a crime committed against God*. The heathen deeply felt this. Their worship was chiefly based upon this conviction, and mainly existed in the means of seeking divine pardon. So was the worship of the Jews. And why do *you* worship God? Is it not because you know that by sinning you have broken His law and incurred His wrath, and can never be happy unless He pardons you? God, in sending His gospel to you or to any other human being, presupposes the truth, that sin is an offence against Him, and that man needs divine pardon.

You instinctively perceive *that God is the source*

¹ Acts xvii. 28, 29.

of true happiness. The heathen perceived it, and therefore placed their private, domestic, and national interests under the protection of their gods. They ascribed their calamities to their sins, and so sought the source of their misery, not in God, but in themselves. This is very remarkable, as they in many ways displayed their ignorance of God's loving character. So it is with you. Though there is still a dark veil intercepting the view of God's love, as it is manifested in Christ, though you misread God's dealings with yourself and others and mankind, yet at times you clearly perceive that God is the only true source of happiness, and long for the happiness He gives.

You instinctively believe *that God blesses one man by means of another.* The heathen believed it, and for this reason especially honoured their priests. The Roman Catholics believe it while invoking the saints, and trusting to the intercession of pope and priest. You show your belief in this truth whenever you ask a godly person to pray for you.

This instinctive faith, common to the human race, prepared both the Jew and the Gentile for the glorious gospel which tells us, that God through the One Mediator, His incarnate Son, saves all who trust in Him.¹

You instinctively perceive *that God cannot pardon us so as to deny His righteous character.* The heathen, while drawing nigh to God for

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

pardon, approached Him as a criminal approaches his judge, and had God's wrath intercepted by the victim dying as a substitute for the criminal. So did the Israelite. They were thus prepared for the gospel message, that Christ died a propitiation for our sins.

At times you have felt something of the marvelous power of this gospel message, because you instinctively believe that a pardon purchased for us by Christ's voluntary submission to the criminal's doom is a pardon worthy of God.

What we beseech you is, not to rest satisfied with the preparatory faith which is in you. It cannot save you. Notwithstanding this faith, you are in danger of departing ever farther from God, and sinking ever deeper under the power of sin.

You are in danger of putting this preparatory faith in the place of the faith which saves. The men in Israel who prided themselves upon their religious faith were the very men who hated Christ and encompassed His death. Do not misinterpret your instinctive perceptions of certain religious truths. They are intended by God to point you away from yourself to the gospel. Listen to its message. Let it penetrate to the depths of your being. Accept it. Return to God through Jesus Christ.

V.

BORN AGAIN.

‘Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’—JOHN iii. 3.

MAN, notwithstanding his preparatory faith, is so devoid of the spiritual life which is born of saving faith, that his entrance to this life is a new birth. With all the religiousness due to his religious instincts, he cannot live the filial life to which he is destined, unless he is born again by the Spirit of God. Natural religion does not develop into spiritual religion. It points thereto and resembles it, but it cannot lead to it. The transition from the one to the other is an awakening, a birth brought about by the Spirit of God.

Look at the heathen. Their religious instincts and perceptions should have kept the way open for God, should He at any time approach them, in order to reveal Himself to them as their God and Saviour. But what happened? Such was the awful power of sin, that it enlisted into its service,

not only their sensual passions, but also their religious instincts and perceptions; the result of which was a public worship, which at last ratified even the most sensual practices.

When God, through His gospel, visited them as their God and Saviour, He found them lost in gross superstition, scepticism, and materialism. In order to save them, He had to awaken in them a new life. It came from a depth infinitely deeper than that whence their natural religion had sprung. It gave rise to perceptions and intuitions infinitely stronger than those which they formerly possessed. It was more powerful than the fiercest opposition it had to encounter. Those who experienced this new birth were conscious that they were triumphantly borne along by a new, a divine power, which had come to dwell in their hearts. The heathen were astonished at the new religious life to which many were awakened by God. Neither friend nor foe could for a moment imagine that this new life was evolved from the old religious life.

Look at the Jews. Owing to the inspired teaching of God's prophets, there shone a heavenly light upon their religious instincts and perceptions which the heathen lacked. Moses, directed by God, established among them a form of worship which tended to keep them free from the perverting and debasing influences by which the worship of the heathen was corrupted. Thus privileged, they

should have been ready to welcome Christ as the holy Son of God. But they hated and rejected him. Why? Because sin had as powerful a dominion over them as over the Gentiles. Some of them were so given to sensualism and materialism, that they had apparently lost all religious instincts and perceptions. They no longer believed in the existence of angels, in the immortality of the soul, in God's present providence and future judgment.¹ Others, again, while looking down upon the heathen, and priding themselves upon their strict adherence to the religious doctrines and practices handed down from the fathers, were equally averse to a living fellowship with God and a truly holy life. They were the foremost in bringing about the death of Christ. How were such men to be saved? By being awakened by God to a life infinitely deeper and higher than that to which their own efforts could conduct them.

It was the glory of the pentecostal day, that thousands were born again to a life infinitely exceeding in its character even the religious life of the disciples as it was previous to the resurrection of Christ. It permanently changed sinners into saints, and cowards into heroes. The sense of guilt, the craving for pardon, the view of God's love, filial trust in God, hatred of sin, thirst after holiness, readiness to do and suffer according to the will of God: these were quite new experiences to

¹ Acts xxiii. 8.

those whom God that day made partakers of the life born of the Holy Spirit.

Supposing you to be born again by God's Spirit I would ask you what sort of life you previously lived? You had a religious training. You were often told about man's exceeding sinfulness, God's righteousness and mercy, God's readiness to pardon and to renew. These truths harmonized with your religious instincts and perceptions. You cordially assented to them. You sincerely believed them. At times you were deeply moved while you were reminded of them, and urged to return to God in order to be reconciled to Him, and to live with Him in blessed fellowship. But did your religious instincts and perceptions enable you to obey the divine call and to commence the new life? No! They convinced you that the gospel was true, but they were powerless to effect your entrance into the kingdom. So the words of Moses and the prophets were assented to by the religious instincts of the Jews; but when they were called upon to surrender to Christ, of whom Moses and the prophets had testified, they failed to do it. They remained Jews, but would not become Christians. So the gospel, which is for many reasons superior to the words of Moses and the prophets, though gaining your assent, did not find in you the ability to live the life which it proclaims. It proved for many years inefficient to bring about your return to God. The new life did not develop out of the old religious life

in you. You needed being born again by God's Spirit. Thank God, this has been graciously granted to you. No new truth was discovered by you, but familiar truths were seen in a new light, and new impressions were created by them. The words God, Saviour, sin, guilt, pardon, have, though apparently understood before, obtained a new significance. Your spiritual insight into their meaning infinitely surpassed your previous knowledge concerning them. Such is the contrast between your former and present religious life, that nothing can be more clear to you than that the transition from the one to the other was due to the birth of a higher life, to a new creative act of the Spirit of God.

May be your case was different from the one I have just described. You grew up indifferent about religion. You led a sensual and sinful life. You were not conscious of any religious instincts and perceptions. You perhaps ascribed all religious fervour to a morbid self-delusion. But what happened to you? Truths which you disregarded, despised, disbelieved, became to you the most momentous realities, and began to exercise over you a supreme control. You could not rest until you had obtained the remission of your sins, and perceived the Spirit of God speaking peace within you, and enabling you to have filial intercourse with God. You are fully persuaded that such a change could never have developed from anything present in your nature. It is a new birth you ascribe to God's Spirit, just as you ascribe the continu-

ance of this new life to the permanent presence in you of God's Spirit, the Author of this life.

It is a remarkable phenomenon that man is utterly incapable of attaining to the filial life which he needs, by virtue of the religious instincts and perceptions of which he is capable, even should he be surrounded by the most favourable influences. The best training under the gospel fails to produce this filial life, as much as the best training under the law failed to produce it. In order to be enabled to live it, man must be born again to a higher life than that to which unregenerated human nature can attain. Both law and gospel point to this higher life, but only God's Spirit can create it. The naturally religious and the irreligious man alike must be led to despair of self, in order to allow God's Spirit to effect this new creation.¹

Who was naturally more religious than Adam? But did his religious life, by its inherent power, develop into that filial life for which God created him? No! Notwithstanding the purity and vigour of his religious instincts and perceptions, he failed to reach the goal. So he was taught to despair of self, and to cast himself upon God's mercy. God, by a display of power infinitely surpassing the power whereby man was created, produced in fallen Adam the higher life he had failed to reach.

If *Adam* failed to evolve out of himself the filial life he was called to live, how could any of his

¹ 2 Cor. v. 17.

descendants succeed in doing it? Christ, the second Adam, was from His birth possessed of this filial life.¹ He needed no new birth by the Spirit. He developed this life to its full maturity in a normal and perfect manner. He was the only sinless man. He lived among *earthly* men as the *heavenly* Man;² among *psychical*³ men as the *spiritual* Man. And now He is seated at God's right hand for the purpose of imparting to us by His Spirit His own filial life. Yield to the promptings of His Spirit, and you, too, will be born again and enter into the kingdom of God, where the Father, by His Spirit, reigns in the hearts of His children.

In some cases the new birth seems to be preceded by a long time of awakening. So it was apparently with the Ethiopian eunuch. In other cases, again, scarcely any time seems to elapse between the awakening and the new birth. So it was with the Philippian jailor.⁴

Men of all ages, and moral and religious conditions, are capable of this new birth. Some undergo it quite unconsciously, while with others it is attended by the most memorable experiences. It

¹ Luke i. 35, ii. 49.

² 1 Cor. xv. 47, R.V.

³ In 1 Cor. ii. 14, xv. 46, the Greek "*psychikos*" is derived from "*psyche*," *soul*. Paul calls Adam *psychical* with reference to Gen. ii. 7, where it is said that he became a *living soul*. When he was tested, he showed that he was dominated by the life emanating from the soul, and not by the life which emanates from God's Spirit in man—that he was not a *spiritual*, but a *psychical* man.

⁴ Acts viii. 25-28 xvi. 26-30.

can be connected with any circumstance, though absolutely dependent upon none. It is often the most wonderful of surprises. A godless sailor, the son of a godly mother, was swept off the deck in a hurricane while uttering blasphemous words, and was rescued in an unconscious state. As soon as consciousness returned he exclaimed, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," and from that very moment proved that he had become a spiritual man. He related that when he was sinking, and his whole past life was instantaneously spread out before him, this word had come to his mind with divine power. A man was once lighting his pipe with a tract he was unwilling to read, when a sentence caught his eye, and so forcibly took hold of him, that he gave up his rebellion against God, and at once was changed into a new creature. Another man indignantly threw a tract into the fire. As it was being consumed, a single word, which was still legible, so struck his conscience that he too surrendered to God, and at once became a new being.

Are you desirous of the new life, to which the new birth is the entrance? Then look upon this desire as one of the means by which God directly prepares you for this blessing. Listen to what He speaks to your heart through His word and Spirit and the events of your life. At this very moment obey His call. Surrender to Him, and He will, according to His promise, make you a partaker of the new life.

VI.

GOD'S CALL MAN'S DUTY.

“We preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God.”—ACTS xiv. 15.

WHEN God calls you to come back to Him, His call and your duty perfectly fit into one another, and your sense of duty clearly echoes the divine call. You are not called to do that which jars upon human nature, but perfectly harmonizes with it.

Man's nature and destiny are one. The one is the clue to interpret the other. If you could read human nature, you should understand human destiny. When God calls you to return to Him, He bids you fulfil your destiny, and human nature instinctively answers, Yes! God's call, man's destiny, and human nature are in harmony with one another. Sin is at variance with this call and destiny and nature.

God created man for the purpose of becoming His loving and obedient son, and expressed that purpose in the instincts and faculties by which man is dis-

tinguished from all inferior creatures. When man began to serve God in a mercenary spirit, he began to act contrary to his destiny and duty. This mercenary spirit at last engendered the rebellious spirit, which has become the common mark of the human race. But sin, though thus dominating over human nature, could not essentially destroy man's nature and duty and destiny. Human nature protests against the dominion of sin, condemns sin, and yearns for a happiness which accords with man's duty and destiny.

When God approaches man, and calls upon him to return to the position he was led to forsake, He addresses Himself to man's nature as He created it, and to the sense of man's duty and destiny, which is inherent in human nature. He awakens conscience; that is, He awakens human nature to a consciousness of its duty and destiny. He thus calls forth an echo to His own voice.

Suppose that human nature was so destroyed by sin that God could not awaken this conscience in man, then His call could not be heard, much less understood. We can only understand God's voice as it strikes against human nature, as against a sounding-board, and awakens an echo. We can only hear what God says by the echo it awakens in us. The voice is divine, but the echo is the human vehicle by which the voice is conveyed to us. A man without a conscience is with regard to God's voice a deaf man. Though God should ever

so loudly call upon him to come back, he would be utterly unable to hear that call. *When God calls upon me to return to Him, I only know and understand this call by my conscience telling me it is my duty to return to God, because it is my destiny to be His loving and obedient child.* I understand and approve of God's bidding, only by understanding and approving of the bidding of my conscience. Whatever divine command is not resounded by my conscience cannot be recognised by me. God's laws must be written on the tablets of my heart—my inner consciousness.¹

You ask, "If God cannot be understood by man except He awakens man's conscience, *is not He thereby dependent upon man while effecting his conversion?*" We answer, by no means. None would be able to see that a divine command is a human duty, if *God* had not given to human nature its peculiar constitution. It is a machinery framed by *God* for the highest of purposes; and God Himself, by awakening through conscience a sense of duty, sets this machinery into motion whenever He calls upon man to return to Him. In order to bring about man's conversion, God not only touches the conscience, but also enlists in His service many things which are infinitely above human contrivance and comprehension, such as His providential dealings, His word, His Spirit.

The human in man is the soil which is only

¹ Rom. ii. 14, 15.

productive by being receptive. Man's returning to God is a response to God's turning to man. Every human action in connection with man's conversion is the result of a divine action. And this remains the relation between the human and the divine, even after man has entered the spiritual life. The root of sin was the desire of leading a life independent of God, while it was man's destiny to be absolutely dependent upon his heavenly Father. Such a life Christ lived upon earth.¹

And mark, when God's voice penetrates to the depth of human nature, He not only awakens the consciousness that it is man's *duty* to return to Him, but also that this duty can only be performed *in absolute dependence upon Him*. While God commands man to return to Him, He offers the grace needed thereto, and awakens in response a sense both of duty and dependence. As soon as man's religious life again becomes what it should be, it ceases to be the result of human effort, and becomes the fruit of God's indwelling Spirit.²

You ask, "If man is so dependent upon God for his religious life, *can he be held responsible for not obeying God's call?*" Our answer is, that duty and responsibility can never be severed. Duty and responsibility are one. God through conscience commands you to return to Him, and through conscience holds you responsible if you do not obey

¹ John v. 30.

² Gal. v 22.

the divine command. Supposing you to have hitherto disregarded God's call, does not conscience, as the echo of God's voice, distinctly affirm that you *ought* to have obeyed it, and that your disobedience is increasing your guilt? Or, should you have returned to God, then, I ask, did not conscience bid you confess to God the sin of disobeying His call, and seek His gracious pardon? When you yielded to the divine light shining in you through conscience, it became impossible to you to plead your *inability* as an excuse for delaying your conversion; you felt that you had incurred a heavy guilt by not at once returning to God, as you were *bound* to do, when you first heard the divine call.

Should the sinner's responsibility for not returning to God cease on account of his entire dependence upon God for the grace needed to do so, then God's authority would cease in commanding him to return, and his conscience would absolve him from the duty of returning to God. But the guilt incurred by not returning to God is not due to man's *inability*, but to his *unwillingness* to return. This conscience clearly teaches you.

In calling you back to Himself, God wishes to change your unwillingness into willingness, not to change your inability into ability. He wants you willingly to cast yourself upon Him, and absolutely to depend upon Him for your spiritual life. By taking this attitude, the sinner returns to the ori-

ginal position whence man departed when he was beguiled by sin into a life of self-dependence. God so constituted human nature that nothing can be more injurious to it than the effort to live a religious life independent of God. It is a sinful effort; not only because it is contrary to the will of God, but also contrary to human nature as God has framed it. The enlightened conscience as well as the righteous God hold you responsible for not returning to God.

You have another question; you ask, "*Is God's call always a manifestation of His pity for the sinner, even if it should not effect the sinner's conversion?*" We answer, "Undoubtedly!" God's compassion is stirred by the sight of the sinner's misery, irrespective of the result of His call; so that the sinner, by resisting the divine call, resists the divine compassion. Every one who turns to God, after having for a time resisted His call, is taught by God's Spirit and his conscience that he was all the time opposing God's loving purpose, and feels constrained to confess this to God, and ask His pardon.

Jesus Christ, the image of the Father, declared to those who rejected Him that He had called them back to the Father, moved by intense pity; and He announced to them their approaching doom while weeping over them.¹ They did not perish, because they had not been the

¹ Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xix. 41, 42.

objects of His love ; neither did His acquiescence in the awful display of the Father's wrath destroy His pity for them. It was moved so much more deeply because of the dark future awaiting them.

It is a mystery to us, not to God, why it takes a longer time with some than with others ere His call effects their conversion. It is a still greater mystery why, in so many cases, God's call does not effect the sinner's conversion, so that he lives and dies without hope—without God and Christ. If God's call were only for those who yield to it, the expression of His love, then the mystery would cease. But then how could Christ have told them who were about to perish that He always loved them ; and how could He have wept over them while foreseeing their doom ?

Let me advise you not to be troubled about any mystery. Hold to what is clear. What is hidden cannot undo that which is revealed. We are bidden to preach to you, *whoever you may be*, the gospel, the glad story, that God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever trusteth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. We are bidden to call you back to this loving God. Should you feel desirous of giving heed to this call, then ascribe it to the gracious workings of God's Spirit. Take it as a token for good. Do not neglect it. Yield to God's call and to this desire. Do not

delay. Let this be the moment of your surrender to God and Christ. Let the Father and the Son rejoice over you, and their joy be re-echoed by the joy with which the Holy Spirit fills your obedient and trusting heart.

VII.

GOD'S WAYS.

“His ways are past finding out.”—ROM. xi. 33.

GOD has many ways at His disposal by which to bring about your conversion. He knows how to approach you and touch the secret springs of your being, in order to move you to return to Him.

Think of *conscience*. Through it you become conscious of your relation to God and man, and of the duties which, in accordance with this relation, you owe to God and man. It is the moral and religious judge in you, enabling you to distinguish between good and bad from a moral and religious point of view. It is the means whereby you ascertain God's judgment concerning your moral and religious life. It may, for many reasons, convey to you God's will and judgment concerning you very imperfectly; but if you were without conscience, God's will and judgment, though expressed ever so clearly, would be illegible and inaudible. It interprets to you God's will and judgment. It

echoes them. It is God's representative in you. While human nature speaks through it, while it is human nature roused to a consciousness of its destiny and duty, it is at the same time the voice of God, and speaks with divine authority, while approving of what is good and condemning what is evil. Evil-doers have sometimes been seized with unspeakable terror while judged and condemned by their conscience. They wished, if possible, to flee from it, but could escape its presence as little as any creature can escape the omnipresent God.

In order to turn you away from sin and draw you to Himself, God touched and roused your conscience. May be you remember the time when you heeded not the voice of conscience. You scarcely heard it speak; and when you heard it, you were not affected by it. You were not frightened or arrested by it in your evil course. You lived as if you were your own God and judge, and despised others as cowards who feared and obeyed conscience. However, there came a time when God spoke so powerfully to you through conscience, that all other voices were drowned by the voice of conscience. Whatever passion, or self-interest, or the world spoke, had to give way to its awful utterances. The reign of God through conscience was inaugurated in you. God was enthroned in you. You pleaded guilty. And having approved of God's dreadful judgment upon you, you rejoiced

to be told of His mercy which has opened a way of escape for you through the blood of Jesus Christ; and you gladly accepted divine pardon. In this manner conscience served God to effect your return to Him.

While conscious of your guilt *you felt the lack of true happiness*. This was another spring God touched when He called you to return to Him. True happiness is one with human nature as God has constituted it. It is there where man realizes his destiny. He was created with the purpose of becoming God's loving and obedient son, and the life born of this relation to God is the root of man's true happiness. None was so happy as Christ. In the darkest moments of His life He was filled with joy and peace. Nothing from *within* ever disturbed Him.¹ The agony in Gethsemane and the darkness on Calvary did not issue from any disharmony within, and were soon overcome. But as to you, while living apart from God, while devoid of filial trust and love, your inward harmony was broken, and so your true happiness destroyed. You were out of harmony with yourself and God. You were as a plant which could not thrive, because taken out of its proper soil. Whatever you called happiness was not accepted as such by the inner voice. When others called you blessed, they were contradicted by your inward craving for true happiness.

¹ John xiv. 30 ; Heb. vii. 26.

This craving was enlisted by God in His service when He effected your return to Him. He deepened it to a deeper depth. He invigorated it. He made the heart cry out most vehemently for the peace and joy which only God can give. You could not but listen and give heed to this cry. You began to loathe the frivolous life in which till then you had indulged. Even innocent pleasures became insipid and distasteful, because the heart sought for true happiness, and could no more be pleased by anything apart from it. While in this state of mind, you turned to God, who offered to give you the blessing you sought by taking up His loving abode in you. You surrendered to Him, and were pardoned and adopted. In this manner the lost harmony between you and God was restored, and the heart made the dwelling-place of true and lasting bliss.

God sometimes uses *the events of one's life* to bring about his conversion. They affect us according to their nature and our susceptibility. If, however, we are left to ourselves, they would never bring about our returning to God. But God often makes them instrumental in preparing us for accepting the gospel. What happened to you? Your earthly hopes failed; you sustained a severe loss; you were bereaved by death of those you loved most. This led you to give up trying to find substantial joy here below, and to look up to God for light and peace. Thus predisposed, the heart at

last trustingly responded to Christ's compassionate invitation, "Come unto *Me*, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and *I* will give you rest."

May be *your very sins* contributed to your conversion. While leading a virtuous life, you felt satisfied with yourself, looked down upon others and scouted the idea that *you* needed a change of heart in order to enter the kingdom of God. But in an evil hour you yielded to temptation, and grievously sinned. Then you came down from your proud position, and sought and accepted God's pardoning and renewing grace.

Perhaps God made use of *your efforts at self-improvement* to effect your conversion. Animated by the desire of leading a faultless life, you endeavoured to imitate the noblest lives known to you, even the loving and self-denying life of Christ and His apostles. As this desire grew deeper and stimulated you to more earnest effort, the painful truth dawned upon you that you lacked the hidden power which moved them to live the divine life of which their daily conduct was the spontaneous outcome. You began to feel miserable and wretched. This tended to open your heart for the glad message that God by His Spirit raises the needy and trusting soul to a participation in the life which Christ manifested upon earth.

God uses *our fellow-men* for our conversion. You ascribe your conversion to the influence of a godly father or mother, or relative or friend, or minister

of the gospel. Perhaps you trace the impression which directly led to your conversion to a few words spoken to you by one whom you met but once in your life.

Such an impression may have been awakened in you by a sudden thought, a dream, a vision.

We cannot always tell what it was which more especially led to our conversion. God often works so quietly, that one's conversion is actually completed ere he is made aware of it. Indeed, every conversion is the result of a divine process which has its unfathomable depths. God may be preparing one for his conversion, and be on the point of changing him into a new creature, *while he is pursuing his evil course at full speed*, as was the case with the Apostle Paul. Man is always, in many respects, a mystery to himself, but most of all when the great transition is made from the natural to the spiritual life. How the thoughts and emotions which are then borne in him originate he cannot tell. How the divine and human mutually act and react he does not know. Let his spiritual experiences be ever so vivid and clear, they come from those deep recesses within to which none but the divine eye can penetrate. God's ways there are past finding out.

Rejoice to know that you are God's workmanship, and that He understands the nature and capabilities of the mind, the heart, and the will, and knows how to touch, control, and guide them, so as

to work out through them His wise and loving purposes. Do you feel His quickening touch? Is there an echo to His call thrilling within you? Is some divine truth being unveiled to you? Are you willing to forsake your own ways and serve God with filial trust and obedience? Then turn to Him, yield to Him, give yourself to Him. Do it just now. And having done so, "be confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you, will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ."¹

¹ Phil. i. 6.



VIII.

CONFESSION OF SIN.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.”—1 JOHN i. 9.

CONFESSION and pardon go together. Christ connects them, and considers this connection as one of the natural laws regulating our intercourse with both God and man. He taught us to pray to our heavenly Father, “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”¹ Every prayer for pardon implicitly or avowedly includes a confession of sin.

You cannot confess your sins to God *without a sense of God's righteousness and the criminal nature of sin*. If sin were not a crime committed against God, and if God in His righteous anger against the sinner did not shut him out from His blessed fellowship, there could be neither the sense of guilt nor the petition for pardon. The object of confessing your sins is to have the sense of guilt removed

¹ Matt. vi. 12, R. V.

by a sense of pardon and of readmittance to communion with God. Should you deny man's culpability and God's wrath as the inevitable result of sin, you would only show your proud rebellious spirit, and your utter unfitness for a life of fellowship with God. Only those who humbly confess their sins are capable of this blessed privilege.

But if you only feel your guilt and God's wrath, you would not confess your sin to God. You might confess it to yourself, or to your fellow-men; but the sense of God's righteous wrath would debar you from His presence. You would, if possible, avoid meeting Him. No sinner can stand the sight of the divine Judge, if he only knows about His righteous anger.¹ This kept Judas from confessing his sin to God and Christ; he could not see or feel anything besides his guilt and God's wrath. There is no greater misery conceivable than to feel one's guilt and not to dare confess it to God, and ask His pardon, because He is only known as the angry Judge. It forbodes hell.

You can only go to God in order to confess and seek pardon, *if you have a predominating sense of His mercy.*

It has pleased God to reveal to us, especially through Jesus Christ, that He is a merciful God, and that His mercy prevails over His anger. The guiltiness of sin provokes His wrath, but the misery

¹ Rev. vi. 16, 17.

it entails stirs His mercy; even as an earthly father is moved to pity by the pain he is called to inflict upon his child.¹ The very wrath of God, necessitated by sin, has opened for Him the way for such a display of mercy as will for ever infinitely surpass all human comprehension. His mercy towards the guilty moved Him to give His Son for the purpose of cancelling our guilt, by a life of obedience unto death, even the death of the cross.²

There is nothing which human history and individual experience teach us more distinctly than that sin is an awful crime most severely punished by God; but, at the same time, there is nothing God has more distinctly revealed to us than His compassion for the sinner. The latter infinitely surpasses the former. God's wrath is infinitely outweighed by His mercy.³

What was it that enabled you, while deeply sensible of your guilt, to draw nigh to God, confess your sin, and accept His pardon? *Your faith in His predominating mercy.* By means of this faith the sense of God's wrath was absorbed by a sense of His mercy. It was faith in a merciful God which gave birth to the believing cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." This faith led you on through the dark valley, where an awakened conscience terrified you, until you reached the throne

¹ Ps. ciii. 8-13.

² Gal. iii. 13; Phil. ii. 8; Rom. v. 19

³ Rom. v. 17.

of grace, where God spoke pardon to you, and filled you with unutterable peace.

Terrified soul, do you wish for pardon in order to live a life of trust and obedience? Then take hold of the word of God as it reveals to you God's readiness to forgive, confess your sins, and accept the gift of pardon.¹

Where is the appropriate place of meeting between the confessing sinner and the forgiving God? There, where you behold Christ suffering death for the sake of the guilty sinner. While dying, and thus admitting the justice of God's wrath, which inflicts death upon a guilty race, He interceded for us, and obtained pardon for the returning sinner. He died that we should live. He was the true sin-offering, bearing the sins of the world. As Jew and Gentile laid the sins they confessed upon a sin-offering, so let us, while confessing our sins, lay them, by faith, upon Christ, as we behold Him dying for us.² To thousands and thousands this act of faith, when first done, was the most holy and blessed act in their lives. No place like Calvary for the guilty sinner seeking reconciliation with God. There let us abide, as long as we need the cleansing blood of Christ.

Go direct to Christ, your Priest and Intercessor, and confess your sins to *Him* and to His *Father*. Let the throne of grace be your confessional. David confessed his sins, not to man, but to God.³ On the

¹ Isa. i. 18.

² Heb. x. 19-23,

³ Ps. xxxii. 5, li.

day of Pentecost thousands received pardon direct from Christ without confessing their particular sins to any human being. The apostles always urged upon awakened sinners to obtain pardon by an instant act of faith in Christ, and never invited either sinner or saint to come to *them* for confession and absolution.¹ There was no confessional, neither in Israel nor in the apostolical Church. The confession of sin preceding baptism was no recital of particular sins in the ears of a mortal, but the confession of one's need of pardon through Christ.

In certain cases God's Spirit urges man to confess to his fellow-man some particular sin he has committed.² Should this admonition of the Spirit be disregarded, then God cannot grant the peace of pardon to the guilty sinner.

At times a public confession may be necessary, with regard to publicly known sins.³ Follow the promptings of God's Spirit, and, if need be, seek the advice of others.

Confession of sin cannot be complete should you be unwilling, as much as possible, to repair the loss or the injury which others have sustained through you.

Confession of sin does not involve the necessity of *enumerating all the particular sins you remember*. Should, however, even after your conversion, a special sin rise up in your memory, and weigh heavily upon your mind, make special mention of it

¹ Acts xvi. 31.

² Jas. v. 16.

³ Acts xix. 18.

to God, and trust Him for special pardon for this special sin.

Let me here answer the question, whether the *believer*, after being pardoned and adopted at the time of his conversion, *is still to confess his sins to God*. Whenever the believer consciously sins, he is conscious of its disturbing influence, and needs a fresh act of faith in the cleansing power of the blood of Christ.¹ John reminds believers of this; and Christ taught His believing disciples to ask their heavenly Father to forgive them their sins.² The believer who thinks he has no need of confession and pardon labours under a sad delusion.

Of course, if the believer is not conscious of having committed any particular sin, he cannot be expected to confess the same to God. But he has always to confess the sinfulness which is inherent in the flesh, and which, even insensibly, pollutes us in the sight of God.³

While, however, on the one hand we should avoid making light of sin, we should on the other hand equally avoid distrusting the efficacy of Christ's intercession for us.⁴ Let us evermore rejoice in the grace of God, which through Christ, our Sacrifice and Priest, incessantly flows to us, and keeps us in close fellowship with our heavenly Father.

¹ 1 John i. 9; ii. 1, 2.

³ 1 John i. 10.

² Matt. vi. 12.

⁴ 1 John ii. 1, 2.



IX

THE DOUBLE RELATION.

“If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.”—1 JOHN v. 20.

You are most intimately related to both God and man. God has adjusted human nature to this twofold relation. Its capacities and instincts point thereto. Indeed, human nature cannot be known apart from this double relation. It is the key which explains man's peculiar destiny. Without it you can have no adequate conception of human nature.

These two relations are not independent of one another. They do not run parallel to one another. They exist in each other. The one contains the other. The one cannot be healthily developed without the other, neither can the one suffer without the other.

In thought, not in time, in sequence of order, not of time, the relation to God takes precedence to the relation to man. The latter is shaped by the former, not the former by the latter. God is not

your Father because man is your brother ; but man is your brother because God is your Father. *Your relation to man is regulated by your relation to God.* Without the divine Fatherhood there could be no human brotherhood. If God's relation to you were not that of Father, your relation to man could not be that of a brother. Because God desires to take up the position of the common Father of all, therefore He desires all to be knit together by the tie of a common brotherhood.

But God cannot actually take up the position of Father towards us, He cannot manifest Himself through our consciousness as Father, He cannot dwell in us as Father, unless we take up the position of a child with regard to Him. In the nature of things there can be no fatherly attitude without a corresponding filial attitude. There may be a fatherly compassion, but there can be no fatherly communion. Sin, though calling forth God's pity for the condemned criminal, necessitated God to treat the sinner as the judge treats the culprit. By sin you fell out of the position and lost the attitude of a child. You became aware of God's judgship, not of His Fatherhood ; of His judicial, not of His fatherly character and functions. You feared God as a criminal fears the judge, so that it was impossible for you to trust and love and obey Him as your Father. You could have no intercourse with God as a child with his father. Thinking of God gave no pleasure.

The worship of God brought no joy. You may have called God Father because others taught you so to do, and because the heart naturally assents to the truth, that the proper relation between God and man is like that between father and child ; but, for all that, God's Fatherhood was to you an unrevealed mystery, because it had not become the root of your religious life, and was not reflected by your consciousness. God dwelt not as Father in you. Through sin the bond had broken which once mutually bound God and man together as Father and child.

As your relation to man is the corollary of your relation to God, as the former naturally flows from the latter, you also fell out of your brotherly position towards man, and forsook your brotherly attitude towards him. You could not love and treat him as a brother, as a child of the common Father. To some you felt selfishly bound by a common interest, and to those, perhaps, you devoted yourself ; but it was as much for your own as for their sake. You knew not what it was to behold in every man a brother, and feel for him a brother's love. As there was estrangement and separation between you and your God, so there was estrangement and separation between you and your fellow-men. Though you may have assented to the truth, that the proper relation between you and your fellow-men is a fraternal one, yet in its true meaning it was hidden to you, and even disliked by you.

The unbrotherly spirit caused by sin is characteristic of the human race. Nations, tribes, families, sections of society, churches, develop a national, a tribal, a family, a sectional, and an ecclesiastical spirit which is antagonistic to the spirit of true brotherhood. Were God's Fatherhood truly understood, the right understanding of man's brotherhood would at once follow; and should this become universal, then envy and hatred and distrust would no more separate churches, nations, families, and individuals, and wars and strifes and contentions would for ever cease.

What has been your experience? *You were enabled to see God's Fatherhood when God's Spirit enabled you to resume the lost attitude of a child.* When you were pardoned by God, you made the blessed discovery that the Judge who had condemned you was indeed your Father. The veil which had hidden His Fatherhood for ever disappeared. His Spirit witnessed with your spirit that you were a son of God, and taught you to cry, "Abba, Father." You were at once translated into a new world—into the heavenly kingdom. A new life, which no human effort could ever have produced, which was needed by human nature, but could never be developed from it, was born in you with the descent of God's Spirit into your heart. It was the life of filial trust and obedience.

This change towards God at once brought about

a corresponding change towards man. When you began to know and love God as your Father, *you spontaneously began to know and love man as your brother*. You did not say, "I see it is my duty to love him, and I will try to fulfil this duty." You often said so before, and miserably failed. But as love to God, born by God's love to you, moved your heart towards God, so you felt, by another new impulse, your heart moved by love towards man. You could not help loving those who with you loved the Father, and, with them, pitying those who knew not the Father. It was quite a new experience. Only since then you began really to understand what brotherly love signifies. This new experience gave a new meaning to the word *man*—rather revealed to you its true meaning. The terms father, mother, brother, sister, friend, neighbour, fellow-man, reflected the new light shining in you. This light, beaming from the Father's countenance, transfigured, with yourself, every human being, and even every material object you beheld. It seemed to you as if the whole world, with yourself, was bathed in the love of the Father.

Your experience at the time of your conversion may not have been quite as bright and vivid as I have described it; but you could not be lifted out of the state of condemnation into that of pardon and adoption without becoming a partaker of the new life, which is love to God and man. Your

turning to God was also your turning to man. Your reconciliation to God was also your reconciliation to man. The Spirit who came to dwell in you, while prompting you to love God, also prompted you to love man. If you have not grieved the Spirit by giving way again to the old selfish life, if you have grown ever stronger in the new life, then your interest in your fellow-men will have grown, and you will be vigorously engaged in the blessed work of saving others, by prayer and personal effort, by word and conduct, by assisting God's workmen.

*Your attitude to man indicates your attitude to God.*¹ If your love to man is weak, it proves that you have but a poor insight in the love of God to you. If it is strong, it proves that you have a deep sense of the love of God. As God's love is, so your love is, according to the measure in which you allow God's love to manifest itself to you. It is a poor love to man which can allow a Christian to seek any profit at the cost of his fellow-men.² If you say you are saved, and care little about others, you know not what salvation means. *He* is saved, who is saved from a selfish spirit. God saves you

¹ 1 John iv. 11, 12, 20.

² I cannot help expressing here my ever-deepening conviction that no Christian can fully realize his calling to be instrumental in saving his fellow-men, and at the same time help on and encourage the drink traffic, which is, both directly and indirectly, a source of unspeakable misery to thousands, yea, millions, of our fellow-men.

from condemnation in order to lead you to an unselfish life. Then, let us not grieve God's Spirit, but yield to His promptings, that we may reflect God's love to us by the love we show to others in our dealings with them in the domestic and social circle, in private and public life. This will be a powerful rebuke of the selfish spirit of the world, and a convincing proof that Christ has saved us from the power of sin. It will be a beacon of light in this dark world to show the path of safety to erring sinners.

X.

THE ANXIOUS ENCOURAGED.

“Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be put to shame.

—ROM. x. 11.

YOU have made up your mind to return to God, and are trying to do so, but without success. You have met with difficulties which seem insurmountable, and you ask, “*How am I to overcome them?*”

You are afraid of approaching God. Why? Because you feel your guilt, and so you feel God’s righteous wrath. It is clear to you that sin is not merely a misfortune, but especially a crime, a most heinous crime, and that the misery entailed by it is due to God’s righteous judgment. There was a time you did not believe in the wrath of God; but now it is most powerfully revealed by your awakened sense of guilt and misery. God’s wrath does not attract, but repel. It creates the distance existing between God and the sinner. It banishes the sinner from the light which emanates from God. It causes darkness and fear and unrest. It expels

the sinner from the abode of bliss, and makes him a wanderer in a dreary wilderness.

This is your present experience. While under a sense of guilt, you dread God, are afraid of His nearness, and even wish there were no God, whose laws you have to obey, by whom you are to be judged, and from whose verdict there is no appeal. You ask, "How can I return to God while sensible of His anger? Will not every criminal keep away from his judge. Should I present myself before my Judge, what can I expect, but to hear my sentence pronounced, and to be given over to condign punishment?"

You thus speak, because you take in but a part of the truth. The deeper depths are hidden to you. Why are you afraid of the heavenly Judge? Because you know not that He is your heavenly Father, who yearns for your return to the relation which existed between Him and man before sin entered the world. Blinded by sin, you misjudge God's dealings with you, and look upon His wrath as the wrath of an unfeeling and relentless Judge. Of course, to such a God no sinner can ever take courage to return. From such a God he must flee. In the existence of such a God he cannot rejoice.

How is it the prodigal son dared return to his father? He knew his father's compassionate heart, and readiness to forgive and restore. When he had lost all trust in others, he trusted his father, saying, "I will arise and go to my father." And he was

welcomed by his father. When your earthly father felt compelled to punish you, his fatherly affection was veiled, but not annihilated, by his righteous anger. It was touched and moved by the very pain he had to inflict. So God's fatherly affection towards you has been deepened into the most tender compassion by the very misery caused by His righteous wrath. While emphasizing His holy anger against all iniquity, He yearns for your return, in order to forgive and restore. His pity is so deep and mighty that it can cancel your guilt, and efface every vestige of His wrath. *Trust to His pity.*

Just as God's fatherly pity was too deep to be uprooted by His anger, so there is in you a need of pardon and reconciliation too deep to be silenced by your sense of sin's guilt and God's wrath. What means it, that man throughout all ages, even the blind heathen, though afraid of God's anger, yet felt the irrepressible impulse to appeal to God's mercy? It was a depth in human nature answering to a depth in the divine nature. It was the doorway left in the human heart by which the compassionate Father could re-enter, and be reunited to His lost child. Is it not wonderful, that while you shrink from God, you at the same time feel an ever-growing desire for pardon and adoption? Is not the power which draws you to God infinitely stronger than the power which frightens you away from His presence? Then yield to the mightier force, and, while justify-

ing God's wrath, return to Him, accept His pardon and enter into filial union with Him. Let the crushing sense of God's wrath be replaced by the healing sense of His love.

But there is another difficulty. The light which has revealed to you God's wrath, *also reveals to you the awful power of sin.* Of course, you never denied that you were a sinner, who often thought, spoke, and did what was wrong. But since you are trying to please God, by thinking, speaking, and doing only what is right, you are met by a power of resistance unknown before. Sin has been stirred into fresh activity. It rises from an unfathomable depth. It seems to reach to the deepest root of your being. It moves quicker than lightning. It appears even in the very presence of God, while you are sincerely engaged in the act of worship. It seems to surround you with an atmosphere which cannot admit the light you wish to shine and dwell in you. You despair of rising above sin's power of separating you from God.

You would feel more hopeful if it could be proved to you that the ruining power of sin is surpassed by the saving power of God. But is not this proof already present in you? As sin is such an ungodly thing, how is it that it has not been able utterly to destroy in you the desire after God and a godly life? How is it, that from a deeper depth than sin could reach, there issues the constant cry for deliverance? How is it, that the

more powerfully sin is at work in you, the more powerfully the longing is felt after a better life? It is due to the power of God, who preserved for Himself this sanctuary in you, in spite of the tendency of sin to destroy it altogether. If it were not for this divine power, no cry for deliverance from sin, and for the re-entrance of God into the heart, would ever be uttered by the sinner.

Mark, while this deeper depth in you protests and reacts against sin, and is in full harmony with God's holy will, yet the power to break the yoke of sin does not dwell there. Why not? Because it is meant to be, not the *source*, but the *receptacle* of the divine power. Here it is where you made the mistake: you looked to your deeper self, and not to God for deliverance. You trusted to your good desires and purposes and efforts, instead of to the living God. But you are a captive, and can never become your own deliverer. Your heart cries out to God, to put forth *His* mighty power and save it from the dominion of sin. In answer to this cry, God offers to re-establish *His* dominion in you, if you will but fully trust Him. Turn away then from your good desires and purposes and efforts, and hand yourself over to God. He who has proved His superior power by preserving a sanctuary in you, whence your protest and cry proceed, He will manifest a still greater power by entering into this sanctuary, establishing Himself there, and thence controlling your whole being, in spite of the

continued presence of sin in the flesh. Let the power of sin move you to turn for salvation to the greater power of God.

Leave off trying, and let it be all trusting. Do not try, by any effort of yours, either to escape God's wrath or to break your bondage to sin. You can do neither the one nor the other. You must receive both forgiveness and deliverance by simply *trusting*. This is the only way of returning to God for pardon and a new life. In this way none ever did fail, or ever can fail. The three thousand, the Ethiopian eunuch, the Philippian jailor, and all who followed the advice of the apostles thus returned to God at once, not by *trying*, but by *trusting*, and were made at once the recipients of God's saving grace. Do thou likewise.

As long as you keep on trying, you prevent God from putting forth His saving power. But as soon as you fully trust Him, He rolls away the load of your guilt, and makes you free from the bondage of sin.

Trying keeps you away from God, but trusting at once unites you to Him. *Trying and trusting cannot go together.* It is either trying which always fails, or trusting which always succeeds. Trying means trusting self and distrusting God. Trusting means despairing of self and relying upon God. It must be either you or God, not partly you and partly God. Therefore, despair of self and trust God.

Christ Himself sets us the example. His life's motto was, "Nothing of self, and all of the Father."¹ And so the apostles' motto was, "Nothing of self, and all of God through Christ."² Follow their example. The act with which at once the life of faith commences is, *returning to God, not by trying, but by trusting.*

¹ John v. 19, 30.

² Gal. ii. 20.

PART II.

ON SURRENDERING TO THE SON.

XI.

WHY SURRENDER TO CHRIST?

“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.”—ACTS xvi. 31.

WHY are you called to surrender to Christ as well as to God? Let me try to answer this very weighty question.

You return to God for the purpose of *being restored to a filial position*. Unless you regain this position you cannot be happy. Such is human nature, as constituted by God, that you must of necessity feel dissatisfied and unhappy as long as you are not enabled to serve God with filial trust and obedience. Only by being admitted to this life can you be in harmony with God and yourself. Whatever progress some of the Old Testament saints may have made in the spiritual life, they all lacked the consciousness of being God's children, and for this reason felt that some need was still left unsupplied, and longed for the time when God would perfect their salvation.

Nothing can be more natural than *that man should be called to surrender to God* in order to be restored

to his lost position. It was a position not gained by any meritorious work, but founded in God's free and loving purpose, and so it could only be maintained by trust in God's love. By distrusting God man fell out of this position. And the only way of recovering it, is by returning to the original trust in God, which, for some time, bound God and man together as Father and son. Man could only live in this position by faith in God's love, and so he can only return to it by surrendering to the love of God, who offers to pardon him, and by His Spirit to reunite him to his God.

Any union founded in love and trust, should it be broken, can only be restored by the offender returning to the offended for the purpose of being pardoned and readmitted to the relation which existed before the offence was committed. In this manner the prodigal son was restored to his former position.

Christ called upon men thus to surrender to His Father. So the prophets of old had done. The spiritual life which distinguished the godly from the ungodly in Israel had sprung from trust in God, not from trusting to any work of their own.¹ From the Psalms we see that God had become to them the supreme object of their trust. John the Baptist emphatically called upon the people to return to God in order to receive pardon and the promised Spirit, by whom they would be introduced into the kingdom of God, and made partakers of a full salvation.²

¹ Rom. i. 17, iv. 19, 22.

² Luke iii. 3, 16.

Christ and His apostles followed in the footsteps of the prophets, and called upon every one to return to God and surrender to Him for receiving the twofold gift of pardon and the Spirit.

And yet Christ distinctly taught that man, in order to find the life he needs, *should surrender to HIM*. To the weary ones He said, "Come unto *Me*, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and *I* will give you rest. Take *My* yoke upon you, and learn of *Me*; for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."¹ To those who felt dissatisfied with themselves, and longed for the missing happiness, He said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto *Me* and drink. He that believeth in *Me*, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."² He declared that He was given by God, "that whosoever believeth in *Him* should not perish, but have everlasting life."³ In restoring man to his lost position, God's restoring work culminates in baptizing the believer with the Holy Spirit; and Christ promised those who believed in *Him*, that *He* would bestow upon them this supreme gift.⁴ His apostles announced that all who surrendered to *Him* would receive pardon and the Spirit.⁵

Did Christ then usurp the place of the Father? By no means! His life was the life of absolute dependence and obedience with regard to the Father.

¹ Matt. xi. 28, 29.

² John vii. 38, 39.

³ John iii. 16.

⁴ Luke xxiv. 49; Acts ii. 33.

⁵ Acts ii. 38, xiii. 38, 39, xvi. 31.

No man ever lived more dependent upon and obedient to God than Christ. He was anointed by His Father for His life's mission, spoke the truth as the Father showed it Him, and worked in the power of His Father. His whole life was one continuous act of obedience to the Father.¹

What then is the position Christ holds? *To those who commit themselves to Him, He imparts what He Himself received from the Father.* I cannot communicate to you the spiritual life I received from God, and so become a source of life to you; but Christ imparts to you the filial life which He lived, by imparting to you the Spirit, to which He Himself owed *His* filial life. It was distinctly declared on the day of Pentecost, that *Christ* had filled His disciples with the Holy Spirit.² The Spirit was given to Him in order that *He* might give the Spirit to us.³ The Father only gives the Spirit to us through Christ, or, otherwise expressed, in the name of Christ.⁴

We thus owe to our union with Christ through faith, the filial life, which is the life for which God created us, but which was never realized by any man before Christ. But in order to receive the Spirit who dwelt in Christ, we must be delivered from the sense of guilt and separation from God—we must be *pardoned*. This is the other gift we receive from God through Christ, or in the name of

¹ John x. 36, viii. 49, x. 18.

² Acts ii. 38.

³ John xv. 26.

⁴ John xiv. 26.

Christ.¹ He was weighed down by our guilt—by what is inseparably connected with our guilt—when the darkness of death for three hours settled upon His soul; but since then all connection between Him and our guilt ceased. He rose from the dead to be the head of a new humanity, a humanity absolved from the guilt of sin. Every one who is united to Him by faith shares with Him *His* absolution from guilt, and is treated by God as if he had actually died with Christ unto sin.² As you receive the Holy Spirit as the Spirit dwelling in Christ and flowing to you through Christ, so you receive the absolution from guilt which Christ obtained from His Father, when He died on account of His connection with the guilty race. By being in Christ through faith, you partake of the justified position of Christ and of the Spirit dwelling in Him.

This is no mere theory. There is no more patent fact in human history than that since the day of Pentecost a new life has been manifested owing to man's surrender to Christ. Such peace, and joy, and purity, and godliness, and moral heroism as those who have surrendered to Christ have displayed in innumerable instances, have never before been witnessed upon earth—with the sole exception of Christ. It was the reflection and the continuance of the life of Christ, and was entirely due to the twofold gift of pardon and the Spirit received from God *through Christ*.

¹ Acts ii. 38, xiii. 38, 39.

² Rom. vi. 4, 11.

Through this mediatorial action of Christ God perfects His saving work in us. Without this our spiritual life would be as incomplete as it was in the Old Testament saints ; we would lack, as they did, the filial spirit, and likewise the power to evangelize the world. There was no other way for man to realize his destiny than by living a life of filial trust and obedience ; but this life could only be imparted to him by the Son, who Himself lived and still lives this life, in whom it was hidden while He was with the Father, and by whom it became manifest by means of His incarnation. The Father created man with the purpose of becoming His child through union with His Son. This mystery was unveiled by the incarnation of the Son. Man, either unconsciously or consciously, felt the need of a divine Man, to whom He could surrender Himself, and by whom He could be fully saved. The prophets in Israel, enlightened by God's Spirit, pointed more or less clearly to this future Deliverer. And to this day there is nothing which so responds to the deepest cravings of the human heart than the preaching of Christ as Mediator between God and man.

Do you feel drawn to Christ as your Deliverer ? Then yield to this drawing. Obey the word of God. Follow the example of others. Commit yourself to Jesus Christ.



XII.

ITS RELATION TO ONE'S CONVERSION.

“Testifying both to Jews and Greeks repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.”—ACTS xx. 21.

THE apostles connected turning to God with surrendering to Christ. Let us see *how they are related to one another*. The relation which Christ holds both to God and to man explains why you are called, not only to turn to God, but also to commit yourself to Christ. It is the key by which to understand the relation between your turning to God and your surrendering to Christ.

Do not separate Father and Son in the work of your salvation. The Father reveals Himself as such only through the Son.¹ You cannot know the Father without knowing the Son. While Christ preached the love of God as the prophets did, He did infinitely more than this: He not only declared that it was a *paternal* love, and by His life showed

¹ John i. 18, xiv. 6-9.

the character of this love, but the Father's love entered into the human heart by means of faith in the love of the Son. The Son's love is to us both the mirror and the vehicle of the Father's love. Through His love we not only know, but also receive the Father's love. By His dwelling in us the Father dwells in us. He cannot dwell in us without the Father, nor the Father without Him. As both are one in the life which mutually unites them, so both are one in bestowing the life which mutually unites God and the saved sinner.

Thus you see the Father and Son have no separate interests. The glory of the one includes the glory of the other. Allegiance to the one includes allegiance to the other. Surrender to the one includes surrender to the other. There is no alternation between loyalty to the Father and loyalty to the Son. Your life is not divided into two halves. There is no fear of giving to the Father what is due to the Son, nor of giving to the Son what is due to the Father.

Christ unequivocally called men to trust Him for salvation, but never spoke or acted as one who had a separate interest from the Father. He distinctly taught that through Him the *Father* worked out His purpose; that He was the *Father's* messenger.¹ He ascribed man's salvation not to His own love, but to the *Father's* love as its *ultimate* cause, when He said, "God (the Father) so loved the world that He

¹ John xii. 44, 45, x. 36, xvii. 3.

gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Men had to look to Him and be saved, because in Him they beheld the Father, and through Him were brought to the Father.¹

The ultimate object Christ had in view was to unite us to the FATHER. He called upon men to turn to the *Father*, and, *for this purpose*, required of them to surrender to the Son. He revealed Himself as the *Mediator* through whom man is reunited to God. The apostles, following His example, distinctly taught that the *ultimate* object of their preaching and teaching was *to lead men back to the FATHER through Christ*. They called upon them to trust Christ as the divinely-appointed *Mediator* between God and man. Through Christ men were to come back to the *Father*, and have unbroken and continual access to Him.² On the day of Pentecost the awakened were told to rely on Christ³ in order to receive pardon and the Spirit, and thus be enabled to trust and obey God as their *Father*. The Spirit which Christ communicates to all who surrender to Him is the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, *Abba, Father*.⁴

Surrender to Christ thus completed the blessing

¹ John vi. 40, xiv. 6-9.

² Rom. v. 1, 2 ; Eph. ii. 18 ; Heb. vii. 25.

³ They were to be baptized *on* (relying on) the name of Jesus Christ. The original has *eπi*, "on," and not *en*, "in."

⁴ Rom. viii. 15.

which was always connected with returning to God. God met the returning sinner in Christ, and, through Christ, granted him the full blessing which had hitherto been unobtainable. It was a new blessing which completed the old blessing. It filled the void which was plainly felt by the most advanced among the saints. God so revealed His Fatherhood through Christ to the returning sinner, that no revelation beyond that is conceivable. What the believer needs is not a new gift.¹ He possesses everything in Christ. But he wants to be led by the Spirit into ever clearer and deeper views of the full blessing contained in the gift of the Son. Since the Father has met him in Christ, he is to abide "in God the Father *and the Lord Jesus Christ*;" and is continually to receive "grace and peace from God the Father *and the Lord Jesus Christ*."² So the Father completes our salvation in and through Christ.

Because the full blessing flows to us from God *through Christ*, therefore Christ is the Head of all believers. In Him they meet one another, and are for ever united to one another, just as Christ Himself is for ever one with the Father.³

We surrender to Christ while turning back to God. *This surrender and this turning back constitute one act.* As the Father meets you in the Son, your surrender to the Son must necessarily be your return to the Father. The apostles did not

¹ 1 John iii. 1, 2.

² Rom. i. 7.

³ John xvii. 19-23.

ask men to commit two acts of faith, first returning to God, and then in addition to it surrendering to Christ. Men had to come to the Father by coming to the Son. As Peter on the day of Pentecost told the people that they had shown their enmity against God by rejecting Christ, so he called upon the awakened to return to God by surrendering to Christ. When Paul told the Philippian jailor that he had to commit himself to Christ in order to be saved, he did not say a word about returning to God, because it was impossible to surrender to the Son without returning to the Father. The converted jailor instinctively knew this, and rejoiced that by trusting Christ he had also trusted God.¹

The apostles preached God as the Father who is inseparably united to the Son, and who reveals and communicates Himself to us through the Son.

One may return to God without surrendering to Christ, should he not know Christ. So it was under the old dispensation. But if one knows Christ as the Mediator between God and man, it is as impossible to turn to God without having faith in Christ as it is impossible to have faith in Christ without returning to God.

There are many who intellectually assent to the teaching that Christ is our Mediator, but who have not given their hearts to Him. They are not altogether devoid of faith in God, but it brings no comfort and is no source of strength in the hour of

¹ Acts xvi. 31, 34.

temptation. Perhaps you are one of them. May be you have begun to feel the need of a religious life which you lack, and even to understand that you have to surrender *to Christ* in order to receive the peace of pardon and the joy of a filial spirit. Then listen to the voice within. Resist not the admonitions of God's Spirit. Give yourself to Christ. He will not reject you. His Spirit will reveal to you His love. And His love will be to you the revelation of the love of the Father.

XIII.

THE GOSPEL DEFINED.

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—JOHN iii. 16.

WHAT is the gospel? *It is the full revelation of the Father's love through the Son.* The Father did show His love to man in various ways before the incarnation of His Son, and man knew Him as the gracious and merciful God. But it was the grace and mercy of the King of kings and of the Lord of lords. It was not known as the love of the Father yearning for the return of His wandering child. Both God's Fatherhood and man's sonship were unrevealed mysteries. But through Christ God approaches man, as a father approaches a rebellious child, for whose change of mind and return home he longs with intense desire.

Christ taught and described God's fatherly yearning for the lost sinner as no one before Him could have done, as He was the first among men to whom this mystery was fully revealed. To this we

owe the most precious of parables, that of the prodigal son. To this was due the unparalleled attraction of His teaching for those who were most deeply fallen. He thought and spoke about God's sympathy with the lost as never man did.

Since Christ fully revealed the fatherly relation God sustains towards man, and the filial relation man has to hold towards God, we understand the high purpose for which God created us. Christ solved the deepest of human problems.—man's destiny, and how to reach it—just by showing us the Father's love, and telling us how to be saved by it.

This unveiling of the Father's love is the special mark of the gospel. It echoes the voice, reflects the light, shines with the glory of the Father's love. When upon gospel ground, you are within the holy of holies, where with unveiled face you behold the Father's love. When you hear the sound of the gospel, you hear the voice of the Father's love. When you meditate on the story of the gospel, you meditate on God's fatherly love. When you are moved or gladdened by the gospel, it is the Father's love which impresses you. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe, because it is the revelation of God's fatherly love.

But mark, the gospel is as much *the full revelation of the love of the Son*, as it is the full revelation of the love of the Father. Though God was not known to man as Father before He was revealed as

such to us by Christ, yet His fatherly love was the secret spring of the grace and mercy He showed man in various ways. In like manner, though it was not known that God's blessings came to man through the mediation of His Son, yet this mediation was always the secret channel through which these blessings flowed to man. Man, since his creation, was so related to the Son, that he could only realize his destiny through the mediation of the Son. The Father gave man to His Son to be led by Him to the goal of his existence. Though sin intervened, the bond between the Son of God and man was not broken; rather, the old bond made place for a new and intenser one, for that by which the redeemed is bound to his Redeemer. While the work of man's redemption was being prepared, the Redeemer was hidden with the Father. Since His incarnation He began to reveal Himself. The story of the gospel is the story of this revelation.

What did He reveal? *His love!* His love was the full revelation of the Father's love. You know the fully revealed love of the Father only by knowing the fully revealed love of the Son. What a test the Son's love had to stand while redeeming us from the dominion of sin! This redemption necessitated His identification with us in such a manner that He, the Source of light and life, had to submit to death and be overshadowed by its impenetrable gloom. He felt what was coming when he was in Gethsemane; but willingly and

gladly accepted His doom, though at the cost of an unparalleled agony. His pity for man culminated with man's guilt. His compassion for the sinner was not extinguished, but inflamed by the sinner's wickedness. He was consumed by His pity. While enduring the utmost shame and pain inflicted upon Him, His soul had but one cry, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The deep insight He had in man's guiltiness moved Him not to invoke God's righteous punishment, but God's pardoning pity. When holy angels, horror-struck, turned away from guilty man, Christ compassionately interceded for him, and gave His life for him.

And when He rose again from the dead, and was about to return to glory, He was filled with one predominating thought—the sinner's return to God as to His loving Father. For this purpose He commanded His disciples to call upon all men to return to God and receive pardon in His name, and promised to empower His disciples for this work of evangelizing the world, by baptizing them with the Holy Spirit. First of all, they were to preach this glad news to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the very city which had cast Him out.¹

Was ever such love shown upon earth? It was the full revelation of the love of the Son, which, until His incarnation, had been hidden to us. It is the glory of the gospel that it relates to us the story

¹ Luke xxiv. 45-49; Mark xvi. 15; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

of this love, and that by means of this story God's Spirit not only opens our eyes to see the love of the Son, but also to intrust ourselves to it and to reproduce it. Yes, the love manifested on the cross is day by day fanning in many hearts an inextinguishable flame of love similar to the love of Jesus Christ.

As the glory of the gospel consists in presenting to us the story of Christ's love, so *the glorious work of God's Spirit consists in revealing this love to the human heart.* The outpouring of the Spirit on the pentecostal day was the united act of the Father and the Son. *It completed the gospel.* Without this the story of the gospel, though the most touching, would have proved impotent to bring man back to God as to his heavenly Father. Without this Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection would have utterly failed to work out God's great and glorious purpose. It was due to the convincing and enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit that, on the pentecostal day, three thousand surrendered to Christ,—to the Revealer of the love of the Father,—received pardon, and were raised to a new life by the indwelling Spirit. Since then the love of the redeemed to one another and to the perishing reflects the love of the Father and the Son, to which the gospel testifies. The gospel of love, showing how God loves us, is the means whereby the Spirit binds us to God, even as God is bound to us; unites us to one another, even as Father and Son are united together; and moves us to seek the sal-

vation of the lost, even as the Father was moved to save us through the Son.

Blessed is the man to whom the Spirit, through the gospel, unfolds the loving thoughts and purposes which the Father works out through the mediation of His Son. Awakened soul, are you still in darkness, and are you desirous of entering into the kingdom of God, where the light of God's love illumines the redeemed soul? Then do as the awakened did on the pentecostal day: turn away from sin and self; behold in Christ the manifestation of God's love towards you; accept Him as your Lord and Saviour; and you, too, will receive pardon and the indwelling Spirit. The gospel is now, as much as it was then, the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth!¹

¹ Rom. i. 16.

XIV.

SURRENDERING TO CHRIST EXPLAINED.

“This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.”—JOHN vi. 29.

As we have seen, the gospel is *the story of the Son's love revealing to us the Father's love*. It is not the story of the Son's love added to the story of the Father's love, but the single story of the love of the Son manifesting the love of the Father. For this reason we are not invited by the gospel to do two separate things while returning to God, namely, first to turn back to the Father and then to surrender to the Son; but to do one thing, namely, to return to the Father by surrendering to the Son.

The jailer, responding to the gospel call by surrendering to *Christ*, rejoiced that he, by so doing, had been intrusting himself to God the *Father*.¹ If you surrender to *Christ*, the *Father* will work out in you, by His Spirit, the purposes of His love.

But what does this surrendering to Christ mean?

¹ Acts xvi. 31-34.

It is an act, not a state of the mind. The very word "surrender" says it. Your surrender to some one is always an *act* committed by you. Of course, the *act* of surrendering to Christ harmonizes with a certain state of the mind. You cannot surrender to Christ unless you are convinced of your need of Christ, and desire that this need should be supplied by Him. But this *state* of mind may be present in you, even for a long time, and yet you may *refuse* to do what would be in full harmony with this state of mind, and *not* surrender to Christ. You may distinctly see your lost condition, and Christ's fitness to save you, and even sincerely desire to be saved by Him, and yet put off the *act* of surrender to Him.

Surrendering to Christ is not done by the understanding or the heart, but by the will. It is an act which can only be done by the will. And God can move the will to do it, though as yet the understanding has received but little light, and the heart has been but faintly in touch with the truth. On the contrary, there may be clear perceptions and deep emotions without the will yielding to God's will by surrendering to Christ.

When God invites you to surrender to Christ, He addresses Himself to the whole man—the intellect, the heart, and the will; but His first aim is to move the will to act. Through the will the whole man is to surrender to Christ. While the heart is trusting, the will is to surrender the trusting heart to Christ. On the pentecostal day

the awakened, though brought very near to this supreme act of surrendering to Christ, did not quite understand how to do it, and asked the apostles, "Men and brethren, *what* must we do?" So the awakened jailer asked, "Sirs, *what* must I do to be saved?" And so Saul asked Christ, "Lord, *what* wilt Thou have me to do?" Listen to the answer we give to this question.

Has the gospel resounded within you? Have you been awakened? Do you feel the need of the salvation God offers you through Christ? Do you desire to be saved by Christ? Then make no mistake. Do not consider one's surrendering to Christ as the cultivating of a certain *state* of mind. It is an *act* of the will, resulting from the trusting of the heart. If you see that Christ is worthy to be trusted by you, then *do* the trusting act to which God calls you, and, irrespective of your *state* of mind, surrender to Christ. Let God no longer wait for this act. Let your soul no longer wait for it. It will be your transition into the kingdom of God, where Christ dwells in those who have surrendered to Him.

This surrendering to Christ is done *individually*. You may do it simultaneously with others, still it must be altogether your own individual act. Others may help you by words of advice and encouragement, but they cannot wholly or partly do it for you. It must be emphatically *your* act. You confront Christ alone and individually, even

though in the presence of others, when you surrender to Him. You take the responsibility upon yourself, and act in your own behalf. You commit yourself to Him as if you were the only person existing, and the only one He offers to save. You act as individually as the bride when she commits herself to the bridegroom.

On the day of Pentecost each one of the three thousand separately surrendered to Christ, as he was separately baptized, while relying upon the name of Christ for pardon and the gift of the Spirit. As each had an individual history, so Christ took each individual case in hand as they, one by one, surrendered to Him.

It is the most solemn moment of your life when you trust Christ for pardon and the Spirit, and surrender to Him. *It is consciously* done. If you are convinced that you live estranged from God and Christ, you cannot surrender to Christ, in order to be saved by Him, without *knowing* what you do. *How* Christ is present with you, *how* He communicates to you pardon and the Spirit, you do not know; but believing in His gracious presence and in His power to save, you surrender to Him, *knowing* that you do it. You are *conscious* of surrendering to Him, and believing that He saves you, though the manner of His saving action is as mysterious to you as the manner in which your soul is present in the body and acts therein.

Perhaps you say, "As far as my memory carries

me back, I never lived the life of the unsaved. Since the dawn of consciousness I know that Christ as my Saviour lived in my heart." Then, in your case no definite and conscious surrender in later life was needed for the purpose of being saved by Christ. May be, you remember a time when God's Spirit was powerfully at work in you, creating in you a strong desire for rest and peace, and when you obtained the desire of your heart without, as far as you recollect, a previous and special act of surrender to Christ. But mark, though you were not then conscious of a definite act of surrender preceding the rest and peace you now enjoy, yet you since then *consciously* live the life of trust in Christ which always follows the conscious surrender to Christ. Why does surrender to Christ save us? Because it opens the heart for Him to dwell therein. Let us therefore rejoice if we are conscious of Christ's saving presence in us, even though we cannot remember the exact moment when the heart first opened to receive Him.

In one sense the surrender to Christ to let Him take up His abode in us is a *final* act, while in another it is only an *incipient* act. As a *final* act it closes the period of *preparatory* grace, in which God prepares the soul for meeting in Christ its appointed Deliverer, and becoming for ever united to Him. As an *incipient* act it opens the period of trust in Christ, which will never end. It is pre-

eminently both a resting and a starting point in your history.

Having once for all surrendered to Christ, you are to go on from surrender to surrender, while Christ leads you, through trial and tribulation, to an ever deepening union with Himself. There will likely be many a moment in your life when you will feel deeply moved to a fresh surrender to Christ for a new blessing. The one lesson you shall have ever to learn is to take all of Christ by giving all of self, and to give all of self by taking all of Christ.

Are you desirous of being for ever joined to Christ as to your Deliverer? Has God opened your eyes to see Christ's fitness to save you, and has He touched your heart to yearn for the pardon and the life treasured up for the trusting soul in Christ? Then no longer delay, but now, even now surrender to Christ.

XV.

ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

“God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ.”—
ACTS ii. 36.

THERE is no more significant act than the act of surrendering to Christ. It is the seed from which springs the entire Christian life. There is nothing essential to the Christian life which is not contained in this act.

By surrendering to Christ you submit to His absolute rule. On the day of Pentecost, when first men were called to surrender to the risen Christ, Peter emphatically declared to the Jews, “That God hath made that same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both LORD and Christ.”¹ Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, taught that Jesus Christ was exalted “above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.”² There is no more universal

¹ Acts ii. 36.

² Eph. ii. 21 ; Phil. ii. 9-11.

and absolute sovereignty conceivable. For this reason Christ was simply called "THE LORD," from whose Lordship every other lordship in the universe is derived, and to which it is subservient; just as God is simply called THE FATHER; the only absolute Originator.¹ As God's Fatherhood infinitely transcends every other fatherhood, so Christ's Lordship infinitely transcends every other lordship.

Have we then to submit to two Lords, first to the Father and then to the Son? Is our allegiance to be divided between the Father and the Son? Or is the allegiance due to the Son to be less than that which is rendered to the Father? By no means! The Father exercises His Lordship through the Son. He has appointed the Son Head of all things, in order through Him to rule the universe. He has not abdicated His throne in favour of the Son, but perfects His rule over all through the Son. There is but one government, that of the Father through the Son.

We here touch upon a great mystery revealed to us through the word of God. An infinite God ruling a finite universe, would leave an infinite distance between the Creator and the creature. Yet man feels the creature's need of being united to God, and reaching the goal of its existence by union with God. God has met this need by the incarnation of His Son, by which the Infinite was united to the finite; and by man's surrender to

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 6.

Christ, by which the finite is united to the Infinite. As the Father now governs as through Christ, whom He has made Head of the universe, and, in a more intimate sense, the Head of the Church,¹ the creature is no more ruled by a God who is at an infinite distance from it. Every surrender to Christ, in order to be ruled by Him as absolute Lord, is an anticipation of the glorious time when the new creation shall be pervaded by the life which is in Christ, as the members of the body are pervaded by the life of the head, *and governed by the head by means of this community of life*. Then "in the dispensation of the fulness of times" God will "sum up all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth."² Because this final purpose of God concerning the universe is first fulfilled in those who surrender to Christ in order to be ruled by Him as their Lord, by a community of life with Him, therefore they are "a kind of first-fruits of God's creatures."³

Though it was only later on that God's Spirit taught this mystery to the apostles, yet every one who surrendered to Christ instinctively knew that he hereby submitted to Christ as to His absolute Lord. What an heroic act it was! The name of Jesus Christ was then detested by both Jews and Gentiles. Yet to every awakened person it was announced as God's arrangement, that he could only obtain pardon and life by surrendering to the

¹ Eph. i. 22.² Eph. i. 10.³ Jas. i. 18.

LORD Jesus Christ. You can imagine what it must have cost those early converts to acknowledge as their divine Lord Him whom their relatives and friends, their co-religionists and fellow-countrymen, despised on account of the accursed death He died on the cross.

You live in a society in which a belief in Christ's Lordship more or less prevails. But thousands who repeat the Creed, "I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only-begotten Son, OUR LORD," have never surrendered to Him as THEIR LORD. Are you convinced that Christ is entitled to your absolute obedience? Then surrender to Him, and submit to His absolute rule. It is as blessed as it is absolute. He rules over you as the first-born over his younger brothers. He rules you by means of the peace He gives you, "which passes all understanding, and keeps your heart and mind."¹ Remember His promise, when He said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."² Remember the humble and loving character shown by your Lord, when He chose to submit Himself for your sake to the ignominious and painful death on the cross.

He is your Lord because He is your DELIVERER. He rules in order to save. You surrender to Jesus as to your Lord by surrendering to Him as to your

¹ Phil. iv. 7.

² Matt. xi. 29, 30.

SAVIOUR. He was made by the Father both Lord and CHRIST.

The Jews looked forward to the Christ who was promised to them as to the future DELIVERER. Peter told them that God had fulfilled His promise by making that same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and CHRIST. They were to surrender to Him as to their DELIVERER. From what would He deliver them? What kept them in misery? Their guilt! Thousands awoke to a sense of their guilt, and desired to be delivered from it. What were they to do? Go to the priest and have a sacrifice offered, as Moses had commanded them? No, they were to surrender to Christ. Through His intercession they would be pardoned. They were to be baptized, relying on the name of Christ for the remission of their sins.

But though the need of pardon was first to be fulfilled, it was not their *deepest* need. The law had commanded them to love God and their fellow-men; and Christ, by His love to God and man, had shown them fully the meaning of the law. Alas! how their lives hitherto differed from that of Christ! Sin had dominion over them, and made them selfish creatures. The secret of their enmity against Christ was their bondage to sin. How can they be delivered from this dominion of sin? How be changed into likeness to Christ? By being inwardly ruled by a new indwelling power. The prophets had foretold the time when, by this

change and this gift, God would enter into a new relation with man, and fulfil what the law was unable to do.¹ Peter told the awakened, that this memorial day of the Sinaitic covenant would become to them the memorial day of the new covenant; that they would receive the Spirit of Christ if they would surrender to Him.²

Thus surrender to Christ made them the recipients of the Holy Spirit. We said that Christ was to rule man by means of a community of life between Him and man. Without this community of life Christ and man, and so God and man, would have remained severed from one another. As long as this separation continues, God's rule over man cannot be a perfect source of happiness to him. His heart yearns for a nearness to God which can only be effected by his being united by God's own Spirit to God through Jesus Christ. It was the most glorious day in man's history, when Christ made man, through surrender to Him, a partaker of the Spirit who had dwelt in Him upon earth, as the source whence flowed His life of perfect love to God and man.

God's gracious rule over man was known to Israel. The relation into which He entered with Israel, as their Lord, was founded in, and commenced with, an act of pardon. He ruled over Israel as over a people redeemed from their guilt by

¹ Deut. xxx. 6; Ezek. xi. 19; Jer. xxxi. 33.

² Acts ii. 38.

the blood of the paschal lamb. He gave His laws to Israel from Sinai as to a ransomed people. This prefigured the gracious rule of Christ as Lord over every one who, on that memorable day, surrendered to Him. He entered the trusting heart as its sovereign ruler, by speaking pardon in the name of the Father, and awakening a sense of being forgiven infinitely deeper than was experienced under the old covenant.¹ And while the laws given by Moses only touched the outward life, His laws, inscribed in the trusting heart, were living principles, out of which the new life spontaneously sprung. As Lord and Christ He Himself became the source of the life which He demanded from the trusting heart.

This makes your surrender to Christ the most significant act of which man is capable. It is the highest act to which God can lead you. It produces the most important results conceivable. The entrance of Jesus into your heart as Lord and Christ, answers to His entrance into glory as Lord of the universe. The former is the key to understand the latter, as it directly flows therefrom. It is to the trusting heart the convincing proof that Jesus is indeed the Lord of all.

Is God's rule to you as yet no source of peace and joy? Are you still bowed down by a sense of guilt? Do you dread the unconquerable power of sin? Then surrender to Christ, that God through

¹ Heb. ix. 13, 14.

Him might extend to you His gracious rule, and grant you pardon and His Spirit. Yours will then be the threefold blessing intimated by the triune God to Israel,¹ and described by Paul as “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God (the Father), and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.”²

¹ Num. vi. 24-26.

² 2 Cor. xiii. 13.

XVI.

THROUGH THE WORD.

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”—ROM. x. 17, R.V.

THE surrender to Christ by no less than three thousand on the day of Pentecost was a most glorious event. It was a worthy opening of the new dispensation. It was an emphatic display of the spiritual power possessed by the crucified One since the Father had raised Him to glory. And what was the medium through which He exerted this power? *The word spoken by Peter!*

The rushing mighty wind and the tongues of fire deeply impressed all susceptible minds, but were utterly powerless to bring about their surrender to Christ. They only served to prepare the way for a favourable reception of the word spoken by Peter. Those who received his word, not those who merely heard the wind and saw the fire, were baptized, relying on the name of Jesus Christ, and received pardon and the gift of the Spirit.¹

¹ Acts ii. 41.

It was a *divine word* which Peter spoke. He spoke it by *divine command*.¹ It was the message he had to deliver in the name of God and Christ.² It was *God's* word as well as *Christ's* word, because spoken by command of both God and Christ.³

Peter was not the only one who on that day delivered God's message. He needed the help, not only of the other apostles, but also of all the men and women who had together for ten days been waiting for the Spirit, and were that day filled with Him. One common impulse moved them all to unite in the loving work of guiding and encouraging the awakened. It was after the awakened had asked what they had to do that the most important business of the day began, into which the hundred and twenty, divinely moved, threw themselves. It was the most glorious after-meeting ever held.

No special command was needed to induce those who had received the Spirit to make others acquainted with the gospel message, and urge them to accept it. It was characteristic of the new dispensation that the work of evangelizing the world was the common work of all who had been baptized with the Spirit. The thousands who had to flee from Jerusalem, and were scattered abroad through the regions of Judea and Samaria, "went everywhere publishing the glad news,"⁴ not because

¹ Acts x. 42.

² 2 Cor. v. 20.

³ 1 Thess. ii. 13; Col. iii. 16; Rom. x. 17.

⁴ Acts viii. 1, 4.

they were told to do so by the apostles, but because they were instinctively moved to it by the indwelling Spirit. In this manner some of these refugees established at Antioch the first and most important of the Gentile Churches.¹ All men and women and children in whom the Spirit dwelt felt constrained to tell others what they knew about Christ, and the way of being saved by Him. In this manner they "held forth the word of life"² as a lamp showing the path of safety to a perishing world. All could not be "teachers" in the Church, but all could be "publishers" of the glad news to the world.

The word thus spoken was divine, not only because it was spoken by God's command, but also because *it was taught by God's Spirit*. Though the apostles had for a long time been the disciples of Christ, they would not have understood him if God's Spirit had not come to dwell in them, and to make them partakers of the redemption and the new life due to Christ.³ Participating in this redemption and life, they found the key by which to explain the person and work of Christ, and the testimony of Scripture concerning Him. They were conscious of the illuminating influence of God's Spirit, and spoke as men who knew that they spoke what they had been taught by God's Spirit concerning the deep things of God.⁴

¹ Acts xi. 19, 20.

³ John xiv. 26, xv. 26, 27, xvi. 13.

² Phil. ii. 15, 16.

⁴ 1 Cor. ii. 10-13.

However, they never professed to enjoy the teaching of the Spirit as an *exclusive* privilege. They addressed all believers as men and women who were taught by the Holy Spirit.¹ Every believer, speaking what he had been taught by God's Spirit, knew that he spoke *the word of God*.² There could then be no doubt that the time foretold by the prophets had come, when all would know God, from the least to the greatest, because God Himself would be their teacher.³

It adds power to our word if we *clearly see* and *deeply feel* what we speak. This is the result of the divine teaching. This marked Peter's word. He was not taught by God's Spirit to formulate a cold dogma regarding the truth, but to *see and feel it*. The truth concerning Christ cannot be really known except you both see and feel it. It is not a repetition of what you know by memory. God's Spirit had created in Peter a sense of the truth born of the truth itself. He spoke about the exaltation of Christ as one who was impressed with what the *Spirit* had shown him concerning it. And when he addressed his hearers about their guilt, and exhorted the awakened to surrender to Christ, he spoke as one who at that moment was in sympathy with Christ, and whose compassion for the unsaved reflected the compassion which at that very moment filled the heart of Christ at the right hand of God.

¹ Rom. viii. 14-16; 1 Cor. ii. 12; 1 John ii. 27.

² 1 Pet. iv. 11.

³ Isa. liv. 13; Jer. xxxi. 33.

We cannot *read* in the recorded address of Peter the *tone* in which he spoke, while in living contact and sympathy with both Christ and the men and women he addressed. To have an adequate idea of the power of his word, one must have seen and heard him while speaking. Faith comes also by *reading*, but especially by *hearing*, the word of Christ.¹

The word one is taught to speak by God's Spirit *cannot be separated from one's individuality*. This was another element of power in the word of Peter. While it was emphatically the word *of God*, it was not less emphatically *his own* word. He spoke the truth, not as James or John, or any of the other apostles saw and felt it, but as *he* saw and felt it, and as none else could see and feel it. It was a *common* conviction he expressed, but shaped by his own individual history and character. If any other apostle had spoken the address, it would have been framed quite differently from the one delivered by Peter. The apostles were the most original of preachers and teachers, just because they were, in a greater measure than others, illumined by the Holy Spirit. While the one profited by the other, they were all equally taught by the Holy Spirit, and spoke each in his own manner. Each had his own individuality stamped upon his word. No writings extant are more original and more transparent with the individuality of the author than

¹ Rom. x. 17.

the apostolic Epistles. This contributes to their wonderful charm and power. So every believer is original when he expresses his mind about the truth according to the measure of light he has received direct from God through the Spirit.

And so what is most divine becomes most human. The word of Peter was as human as it was divine. The source was divine, the channel human. The divine touched the hearers by the human manner in which it was felt and expressed by Peter. How did men get into touch with the divine they perceived in Christ? By getting in touch with the *human* in Christ. None so human, and yet none so divine as Christ. How did He manifest to us the divine love? By His *human* love, His *human* look and tears and tone of speech. If ever, it was on the day of Pentecost that Peter spoke as an Israelite to Israelites, as a man to his fellow-men. His human nature, with its human affections, was never before so deeply stirred and so mightily moved. This at once drew to him all susceptible minds, and gave him a firm hold upon them. His word impressed them as never man's word had done before.

And yet it was not so much Peter who spoke that day as the Spirit of Christ dwelling in Him.¹ The thought never entered his mind that *he* was moving the hearts to feel and confess their guilt, and to surrender to Christ. He was fully conscious

¹ Matt. x. 20.

that he was but the human instrument through which Christ saved the lost; just as Christ, when upon earth, ascribed His powerful words and extraordinary works, not to Himself, but to His Father.

Let me finally remark, that God's word is *the sufficient means of saving the soul*. You are saved by trust in Christ; but whence this trust? It comes of hearing, and hearing by the word of God.¹ In order to move the awakened to surrender to Christ, Peter made use of no other means than testifying the truth, and exhorting them to take refuge in Christ.² The awakened were saved simply by receiving the word of Peter.³ The remission of sin and the baptism with the Spirit immediately followed, when they, *according to the word spoken to them*, were baptized, *relying upon the name of Christ*. To prove that it was *by solely yielding to the word* that men were saved, it pleased God to grant pardon and the Spirit to the first believers from the Gentiles, while they were hearing the word of Peter with a believing heart, *even before they were baptized*.⁴

Baptism was as little the means of salvation as circumcision was the means of justification.⁵ If you honestly seek salvation, just obey the word which bids you trust Christ and surrender to Him, and you will be saved. Trust to no feeling, or experience, or sacrament, or what people call the

¹ Rom. x. 17.

² Acts ii. 40.

³ Acts ii. 41.

⁴ Acts x. 44, 45.

⁵ Rom. iv. 9, 10.

means of grace ; but obey the word spoken to you in the name of God and Christ, and which commands you *at once* to look away from everything and solely to trust Christ. Obey, as the Philippian jailer did, the word, saying, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," and you too shall be saved at once.

Because we are saved solely by receiving the word, salvation, or rather Christ the Saviour, is brought very nigh to us, as nigh as the word, while we repeat it and think of it.¹ Then take hold of Christ by taking hold of His word. Say to Him, "Thou bidst me trust Thee. I am called to come to Thee just as I am. Thou hast promised that Thou wilt in no wise cast out them that come to Thee."² I accept this promise. I trust Thee. I give myself to Thee, just now, just as I am. . . . I thank Thee that Thou dost accept me, not because of what I *feel*, but because I *trust* Thy word, which says, 'Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.'"

¹ Rom. x. 6-11.

² John vi. 37.

XVII.

✓ *WHY HESITATE ?*

“The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart.”—
ROM. x. 8.

YOU are convinced of your lost condition, and desire to be saved by Christ. You know that His word bids you surrender to Him in order to be saved by Him. And yet you hesitate to do so. *Why this hesitation ?*

Are you perhaps unwilling to give up some secret sin ? You answer, “No, there is nothing I more earnestly desire than being made free by Christ from every known sin.”

What then ? Are you afraid by joining those who have surrendered to Christ to incur the disapprobation and dislike of some companion or relative or friend ? You reply, “No ; could I but be assured of being saved, the joy of salvation would outweigh the pain inflicted by the scorn even of those I love and respect most.”

What then ? Do you think that there is some-

thing in you which makes Christ less willing to save you than others? You say, "No; though I am sometimes tempted to think so, yet I know it is not the case."

Tell me, then, what is it that keeps you from surrendering to Christ? You answer, "I am not in the proper state of mind. At times I feel penitent, and even shed bitter tears on account of my sins; then again all feeling is gone. Worse than this, when I wish to pray, I do not know what to say: my thoughts wander, I am even troubled by wicked suggestions. The more I try to improve my state of mind the less I succeed. This keeps me back from Christ. How dare I, such as I am, give myself to Him? He cannot but despise and loathe me."

Why are you thus misunderstanding Christ? Does He call you first to improve the state of your mind, and then to commit yourself to Him? Must Christ in saving you continue what you have begun? Is He a physician who cannot heal the sick unless they first somewhat improve their miserable condition? Should you continue to seek in you any other ground for giving yourself to Christ than your lost condition, and your utter impotency to help yourself, then you will never surrender to Him. By acting as you now do, you cast up a wall of partition between you and Christ, you widen the distance between you and Him. While He approaches you as a lost sinner, offering to save

you, you hold Him back, saying, "I am not yet in a condition to be a fit subject for Thy saving power."

Leave off trying to improve yourself, and thus resisting the gospel call. Follow the example of those who on the day of Pentecost surrendered to Christ, without first endeavouring to improve their condition. When they felt their guilt, and desired that they might be pardoned, and be made partakers of the promised Spirit, they were told at once to surrender to Christ. They received this word, were baptized, relying upon the name of Christ, and returned home pardoned and renewed. This happened to them without their having put forth a single effort to make their hearts fit for the indwelling of Christ through the Spirit. As guilty criminals and helpless creatures they cast themselves upon Christ, and were at once saved by Him. Many of them undoubtedly had gone to where the apostles were, with hearts filled with hatred against Christ. When Peter began to speak he stirred that hatred to a deeper depth. But when they saw the truth that Christ was indeed the Son of God, the promised Messiah, they abhorred themselves with unspeakable abhorrence. Remembering the fury with which they had haunted Him to death, and the joy with which they had seen Him dying, they detested themselves as incarnate devils. They felt that they were only worthy of being given over by God to eternal shame. Yet just as they were they surrendered to Christ, and were then and there

pardoned and made new creatures. They returned home the trophies of divine grace, the monuments of God's saving power. Do as they did, and just as you are surrender to Christ!

Remember the Philippian jailer. When he saw the day before Paul and Silas with their bleeding bodies, and heard them speak about Christ, the Saviour both of the Jews and the Gentiles, he despised and rejected the divine message. You can easily fancy how he detested himself when he felt the need of salvation, and eagerly listened to the loving words of these men. What was he told to do? Had he to set about improving his wicked heart? No. He had at once to give that heart to Christ for pardon and renewal. So he did, and he was saved by Christ then and there. Think of it: an ignorant and wicked heathen, who had no praying mother, no helping friend, who up till a few hours ago had never heard about God and Christ, was instantly saved by giving himself to Christ just as he was. Do likewise, and surrender now to Christ.

There is another mistake you have to avoid. Don't say that you will be in a fit state of mind, with regard to your surrender to Christ, *when you have a deeper sense of guilt and misery*. It is not the *depth*, but the *sincerity* of this sense which makes you fit to be saved by Christ at once. The Ethiopian eunuch and Lydia the seller of purple were not so shaken by the Spirit as the jailer and

others were. With many the work of God's Spirit proceeds very quietly. Should He have convinced you of your lost condition, and awakened in you a desire of being saved, then listen to this call, do not delay, but give yourself at once to Christ.

You ask, *whether repentance is not to go before surrender to Christ*. But what do you mean by repentance? As we have shown before (No. I.), the original, which has been translated by repentance, means change of mind—change of the mind's course—with regard to God, and is exactly the same as *turning back to God*. And, as we have shown in another place (No. XII.), you cannot turn back to God, when He comes to you through Christ, without surrendering to Christ. The apostles never called upon men first to change the mind's attitude towards God and then to surrender to Christ, as the one was included in the other. The Philippian jailer was only told to surrender to Christ; and when he did it, his returning to God was completed by this very act. So, then, what is meant by the Scripture term, which has been rendered by "repentance," is an act *done instantly by the trusting person*. It was instantly done by the three thousand, the eunuch, Lydia and the jailer, a few minutes after they had begun to inquire about the way of salvation. If you are convinced of your lost condition, and sincerely desire to be saved, *you only need to trust Christ* in order at once to surrender to Him.

Do you remember the time when first you felt

convinced of your lost condition, and desirous of being saved by Christ? *That* was the time when you should have obeyed the gospel message, and have surrendered to Christ. But you did not trust Christ then. For some reason you dared not commit yourself to Him. And so, since then, you have lived an unhappy and unfruitful life. Do close this sad chapter of your life *now*. Begin *now* a new chapter, which has for its heading, TRUSTING CHRIST. Let this *present* moment be your entrance into the life of trust in Christ by surrendering to Christ. Let nothing keep you back. No longer hesitate. Just lift up your trusting heart to Christ, and tell Him you trust Him. Tell it Him over and over again. Trust Him, irrespective of your feeling. Trust *Him* just because there is nothing in *you* which you dare trust. Trust, only trust. "He that believeth on the Son has everlasting life."¹

¹ John iii. 36.

XVIII.

ADOPTION.

“The Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”—
Rom. viii. 15.

The first blessing the sinner needs is pardon. It opens the way to every subsequent blessing needed by the pardoned sinner in order to please God, and be happy both in the present and the future life. Only the pardoned can be sanctified and glorified.

On the pentecostal day, thousands awoke to a sense of their guilt, and a desire to escape the judgment awaiting the guilty. Peter, referring to the passage just quoted by him, which promised deliverance to all who would call upon the name of the Lord,¹ declared to the awakened that Christ was made the Lord of all, and that by relying upon Him they would be forgiven.

When Paul said to the awakened jailer, “Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,” he had especially in view the crushing sense of

¹ Joel ii. 32.

guilt from which the jailer wished to be delivered. The apostles always preached the gospel with the conviction that forgiveness was the need which, first of all, had to be satisfied. Remember the solemn announcement with which Paul concluded his first evangelistic address at Antioch in Pisidia, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins*: and by Him all who trust are justified (declared free) from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." ¹

The first gift which God instantly grants to every one who commits himself to Christ is pardon. *But pardon is not life.* It only opens the way to the life which the guilty sinner needs. It is the natural condition which makes this life possible. When the sinner returns to God, the heart seeks reconciliation with God in order to be admitted to a life of communion with Him. Forgiveness is at once followed by communion.

But what is the nature of this communion? It is fellowship between God and man, as between Father and son. For this reason, pardon through Christ is followed by *adoption* through Christ. Without the latter the former would miss its purpose, and leave the sinner in an unsaved condition. Peter had referred to the passage which foretells that those who would be delivered from God's judgment would receive God's Spirit,² and so

¹ Acts xiii. 38, 39.

² Joel ii. 28.

he assured the awakened that, by relying on Christ as their Lord and Saviour, they would obtain both pardon and the gift of the Spirit.¹ What is the blessing the Spirit brings? He raises the pardoned sinner to the position of a son of God, and by His indwelling enables him to live as a child of God. *He is the Spirit of adoption.*²

The Spirit of the Father dwelt in Christ as the Spirit of sonship, uniting God and Christ together as Father and Son; and so, on the day of Pentecost the Spirit of Christ came down to unite to Christ every one who would surrender to Him, thereby enabling him to hold with Christ the same filial position with regard to the Father, and live the same life of filial trust and obedience which Christ lived while on earth.

The Spirit of adoption was the special gift characterizing the new dispensation. The Spirit of God was not known as the Spirit of adoption under the old dispensation, therefore the lives of the Old Testament believers, however excellent, were by far excelled by the lives of the New Testament believers.³ They lacked the deeper sense of God's nearness, and the intenser love to man, which were the fruit of the Spirit of adoption. Without the one the other could not exist. The nearer you feel to God, the nearer you are drawn to man. There was a wall of separation left between God and the Old Testament saints. Though they believed in

¹ Acts ii. 38.

² Rom. viii. 15.

³ Gal. iv. 1-7.

the forgiveness of their sins, yet that forgiveness was so incomplete that they had again and again to seek pardon for sins which *had* been forgiven, as if they had *not* been forgiven.¹ They could not see the unveiled face of the *Father*, and could not love God as their *Father*. But when Christ had cancelled our guilt by His obedience unto death, God's pardon was complete, the wall of separation removed, and man became united to God as a child to his father, and to his fellow-man as a brother to his brother.

Without the Spirit of adoption there could not be that intimate union between God and man, and between man and man, which was necessary to constitute that new community called the Church of God, in which the kingdom of God is essentially realized.

Do not separate what God has joined together through Jesus Christ. *He who is pardoned through Christ is also adopted through Christ.* There has always been the tendency to go back to the Old Testament and lower the pardon we receive through Christ. Where this tendency prevails, the believer serves God, not in a filial, but in a servile spirit. Such was the case with many even at the time of the apostles, especially in the churches at Rome and in Galatia.² The consequence was, that they not only lost the joy and peace, but also the power over sin which immediately flow from the Spirit of adoption.³

¹ Heb. x. 1-13.

² Rom. viii. 15 ; Gal. iv. 7-9.

³ Gal. v. 15, 26.

The Spirit of adoption is, *in its operation*, one with our spiritual life. If, through ignorance or unbelief or disobedience, our spiritual life is poor and weak, the Spirit of adoption is but faintly perceived. Therefore grieve not the Spirit. He is very tender and sensitive, just because He interprets and imparts to us the tender and sensitive love of the Father as it was revealed in Jesus Christ. Let but your heart by filial trust and obedience be a fit home for the Spirit of adoption, and, by His indwelling, peace and joy and love, both to God and man, will abound in you.

XIX.

FULL ASSURANCE.

“Fully persuaded.”—ROM. iv. 21.

“Full assurance of hope.”—HEB. vi. 11.

NEXT to the question of God's existence, the question of my being pardoned and adopted is the most momentous. It involves my real happiness, for I cannot be at rest unless I am sure that I am pardoned and adopted. Since it is a question of such supreme importance, I here require the firmest possible ground of assurance,—a full assurance which removes all doubt, an unclouded light which dispels all darkness.

Not long ago I received a letter from a young friend, in which the following occurs: “I long for the knowledge and the help of the supreme Good. But will He ever be known by me? Is He knowable?” So there are persons believing in God who say, “I long to know that I am pardoned and adopted. But will it ever be made known to me? Is it knowable in this life?” I reply, “If man, in

order to realize the purpose of his existence, needs pardon and adoption, and if God is willing to supply this need, then its fulfilment must not only be knowable, but also knowable in the most indubitable manner.

God's Spirit, working through the word, fulfilled this need. Let us see how He did it on the pentecostal day, as the work done on that day is pre-eminently illustrative of the present gospel dispensation.

The sense of pardon is impossible without a previous sense of guilt. God's Spirit must work in you a sense of guilt before He can awaken in you a sense of pardon. So He did on the pentecostal day. Peter spoke as a man who clearly saw God's judgment approaching. He trembled as he saw the dark cloud hanging over the nation, which had filled the measure of its iniquity by crucifying the Son of God. God's Spirit communicated the conviction He had wrought in Peter to thousands of his hearers. Their guilt was to them as clear as if they saw it written in flaming letters. They believed in their guilty condition, not because Peter declared them guilty, but because God's Spirit had opened their eyes to see it, and had touched their hearts to feel it. They saw the truth of their guiltiness in its own light. It shone in them as a divine light, illuminating their past dark history. *They could not but be fully assured of their guilty condition.*

But Peter, while declaring their awful guilt, did not speak as one who had no fellow-feeling for them. He himself had been implicated in the nation's guilt. He had himself, like this nation, denied the Lord Jesus Christ. He spoke as a pardoned man. There was not the self-complacency of the Pharisee, but the peace and joy of the pardoned sinner, in his face and tone while addressing his guilty countrymen. When he, while urging the awakened to surrender to Christ, testified to the pardon Christ Himself had spoken to him, *they were fully assured that he spoke the truth*. Such was the sympathy created by God's Spirit between them and Peter, that they could not but perceive that he testified to a veritable experience—the very experience *they* needed in order to be delivered from the misery resulting from their sense of guilt. They were fully assured that the glad message of pardon through Christ was no fiction, but a divine revelation.

Thus prepared for favourably receiving the gospel call, they yielded to Peter's loving and urgent words, and surrendered to Christ. That was the critical moment. When some began to yield, others soon followed, seeing the wonderful change instantly wrought in every one who surrendered to Christ. Only those who have undergone a similar experience can understand this change. The sense of guilt was extinguished by a sense of pardon. The fear of coming judgment was gone altogether. They

knew that they had entered the kingdom of God, where there is no condemnation. *They were fully persuaded of being pardoned.* They did not believe it because of the words of Peter, but because they were translated by God's Spirit into the light of God's pardoning love. Who can be in doubt about his having left a dark room, if he is walking in the light of the sun? So all doubt as to their being pardoned was absorbed by the love of God, which was shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.¹ But they did not feel as the pardoned slave or subject. An inexpressible sense of nearness to God filled their hearts. They felt as near to Him as the prodigal son felt to his father, when he sat next to his father at the festive board. There was something in their trust in God which reflected God's paternal tenderness towards them. They felt as children resting on the bosom of the heavenly Father. In this consciousness of God's tender love to them, they found the key to understand the tenderness with which the hundred and twenty had spoken to them, and with which the Saviour had prayed for them while dying on the cross. *They were fully assured that they were treated by God as beloved children are treated by a loving father.* The new Spirit in them was the Spirit of adoption. They did not believe in the new relation between them and God because the apostles told them so to do, but because they were conscious of it. The nature of the new life was such,

¹ Rom. v. 5.

that they could not but believe that God loved them as a father loves his child. God's Spirit witnessed with their spirit that they were sons of God.¹

Thus you see that the full assurance of pardon and adoption is nothing but *the clear consciousness of being translated, by the Spirit acting through the word, from a state of guilt and condemnation into a state of pardon and adoption.* And if one of them had been told that he laboured under a delusion, he would have replied, "If I were to doubt of my being pardoned and adopted, I might as well doubt of my own existence, as my happy experience is none other than that of a pardoned and adopted sinner. And suppose this were a delusion, what a blessed delusion it is to which I owe my love to God and man, my peace and joy in trouble and trial, and my deliverance from the power of sin."

The pentecostal history proves that *full assurance immediately follows full surrender to Christ.* The Spirit at once enters the heart, there to dwell as the seal of our union with Christ,² and the earnest of our future inheritance.³ The life to which surrender to Christ opens the heart is not to *end*, but to *begin* with full assurance. Assurance is not the setting, but the rising sun. We need this full assurance from the very first, in order to walk from the very first as children of God. The fellowship which those who surrendered to Christ on the pentecostal

¹ Rom. viii. 16.

² Eph. i. 13, 14.

³ Rom. viii. 17.

day began at once to enjoy with God and one another,—their overflowing love, their fearless confession of Christ, their joyful worship, their cheerful walk,¹—were all owing to their full assurance of faith.

Suppose you are lacking this full assurance, notwithstanding your surrender to Christ, then this would prove that there has been something lacking in your surrender, owing to a defective preaching of the gospel, or a defective trust in Christ, or a defective renunciation of sin. Unless the defect, whatever it is, be remedied, your spiritual life must remain a poor and defective life, not yielding the full fruit of the Spirit.

One may have had this full assurance and yet have lost it again. After a clear sunrise the sky may have become overcast with clouds. So it was with many in the days of the apostles who lost the vigorous faith in Christ they once had, and relapsed into old habits and sins.² They were to the apostles a source of much grief. One thing which especially sapped the health of their spiritual life, was their having recourse to so-called sacred things and acts as a means of life, instead of trusting Christ as its only and all-sufficient source and deriving all life and power only from Him through trusting Him. In opposing this error Paul made this memorable declaration, "I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ: yet I live; and

¹ Acts ii. 42, 47.

² Gal. iii. 3, v. 15, 26; Heb. xii. 12, 13.

yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life, which I now live in the flesh I live by faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”¹

Full assurance is born of full trust for full salvation in Jesus Christ. By fully trusting you turn the heart away from sin and self and wholly direct it to Christ, in order to receive all the light and life flowing from Him directly to the trusting heart.

Full surrender for full salvation is always followed by full assurance.

¹ Gal. ii. 19, 20.

XX.

SEPARATION.

“Be ye separate.”—2 Cor. vi. 17.

Surrender to Christ includes separation from the unbelieving world. You are not first to separate yourself from the world, and then to surrender to Christ; by surrendering to Christ you separate yourself from the world. On the day of Pentecost, Peter, with many words, testified and exhorted the awakened, saying, “Save yourselves (and so separate yourselves) from this crooked generation.”¹ The Spirit of Christ, once imparted to them, could not but separate them from the unbelieving world.

When Christ was upon earth there was a growing disharmony and antagonism between His spirit and the spirit of the world. To this was due His painful and ignominious death. The awakened on the day of Pentecost deeply felt the guilt and shame of their unholy and unrighteous lives, and surrendered to Christ the Holy and Righteous One, not merely

¹ Acts ii. 10, R.V.

to be pardoned, but also to be delivered, and to be enabled to live a righteous and holy life. Such was the change they at once experienced, that they began to resemble Christ in their desires and thoughts, their words and acts. In them the world saw the life of Christ, though imperfectly yet really reproduced. This made them the heirs of the contempt and opposition of the world which Christ had suffered. "They went forth unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach."¹ Blessed union with Christ and separation from the world!

When at home they showed the change wrought by the new indwelling Spirit, the other members of the family said, "You are no more one with us; you are not, as we are, indifferent respecting Christ; you do not despise Him as we do: you praise and worship Him as your Lord and Saviour; you imitate His example; you reflect His character; you have lost your relish in some of our practices, pursuits, and pleasures." They led separated lives from their dearest relatives.

So it was with regard to their associates in society, who refused to surrender to Christ. There was a deep and wide chasm established between them.

Were they to leave the family and society? Were they to go where those who dissented from them could not follow, and be a source of trouble? Christ did not do it. His pity with the unsaved kept Him

¹ Heb. xiii. 13.

among them. He tried in various ways to save them. While fearlessly rebuking their sins, He tenderly loved and gladly helped them in whatever way He could. And when they made Him die on the cross, He blessed them with the choicest of blessings, by interceding for them with the Father.

In this manner Christ not only perfected the manifestation of His love towards the lost, but also His own character.¹ Moreover, He showed the world *its* unholy and unrighteous character by a holy and righteous life displayed in its presence. Those who surrendered to Christ had to do likewise. They were not to break any divinely-ordained bond, uniting them to the home, to society, and to the nation; but to fulfil their domestic, social, and national duties in a holy and righteous manner: and thus to be the representatives of the holy Christ in an unholy world. While fulfilling their domestic, social, and national duties, they were to labour for the salvation of the unsaved in a meek and loving spirit; to be ready to suffer for those by whom they were opposed and despitefully used: and thus to grow in likeness to Christ.

Christ, though separated from the world, was, by His love, nearer to it than any one else. He looked upon sinners as His lost brothers and sisters, identified Himself with them, felt their

¹ Heb. ii. 10; v. 8.

sins as if they were His own, and was ready to die the death *they* should have died, in order to wipe out their guilt in the sight of God. Those who surrendered to Christ, though spiritually living apart from unbelievers, had thus to show them that they clung to them by the love which laboured for their salvation, and enabled them, for *their* sakes, even to die at their hands; and while dying, to intercede for them with Christ, even as He interceded for them with the Father.¹

There is another remark I wish to make. The new spirit which induced those who had surrendered to Christ to separate themselves from the world, was not to seek its proper expression in anything calculated to strike the senses, such as a strange and conspicuous dress, or speech, or habit. The new spirit with which they were embued was too spiritual for this. Excepting what savoured of the worldly spirit, and tended to nourish it, they had to dress and speak and behave as others did. Their *acts* were to breathe the new spirit dwelling in them. They were to be distinguished from others by their holy and righteous *walk*.

So it was with Christ. There was nothing about Him so peculiar as at once to strike the senses. His dress and speech and manner were like those of others. Because there was nothing strange about Him, He was easily accessible to all, to the ignorant and the poor, even to the little

¹ Acts vii. 59, 60.

children. It was only by a daily close and sympathetic contact with Him, that His disciples gradually discovered that He, by His holy and righteous character, towered infinitely high above all men.

Christians are to impress others by what is essentially one with the new man, and not by what is accidentally hung about it. The divine in them should manifest itself, because of its very divineness, in a simple and natural manner.

The spirit and purpose of this separation from the world brought about *a union among believers* such as the world had never witnessed before. For the first time the spirit of true brotherhood was fully displayed. This was due to the Spirit of adoption common to all. Hitherto the religious bond which united the saints in Israel was as weak and elementary as the bond which united them into one nation. All religion hitherto was of a *national* character. It tended to separate, not to unite the nations. Only those who were of the same nation treated each other as brethren. But now God revealed Himself as Father to all who surrendered to Christ; and men surrendered to Christ not as to an earthly monarch, having sway over a particular nation, but as to the Head of the universe. United to Him, they felt lifted infinitely above the earthly limits separating the nations from one another. Their hearts wonderfully expanded as they felt they were brothers to one another, not because they were descendants of the same

patriarchs, not even of Adam, the common progenitor of all, but because they were children of the heavenly Father through the Spirit of adoption. This sense of union was as deep as it was wide.¹ A love bound them together infinitely beyond what man could ever have anticipated. By *their* mutual love they reflected nothing less than the mutual love *which bound God and His only-begotten Son together.*² They formed a body in which the kingdom of God was essentially realized, and which, to distinguish it from the national body, was called the *Church.*³ It had no national, no earthly limits. Death could as little separate them from one another as it could separate them from Christ, their common Head.⁴

One main purpose for which this body was created, was to gather the elect out of all nations into the kingdom,⁵ until the time should come when all the nations shall surrender to Christ, and the earth ultimately be renewed to become the fit abode of redeemed and glorified humanity.⁶ They instinctively felt this high and holy calling. All worked together for this purpose,⁷ so that within a

¹ Acts ii. 44, 45.

² John xvii. 21.

³ Or rather *congregation*, as the Greek *ecclesia* (ἐκκλησία) has been translated by the Dutch and German Versions in Acts ii. 47 and elsewhere. *Ecclesia* is composed of "ek," *out of*, and "kaleo," *to call or gather*. It was the congregation of the worshippers of Christ *called together out of the nations* (Rev. v. 9).

⁴ Phil. i. 23.

⁵ Rom. ix. 23, 24, x. 14, 15.

⁶ 2 Pet. iii. 13.

⁷ Acts viii. 4, xi. 19, 20.

few years there were flourishing churches everywhere among the nations.¹ There was nothing which more powerfully fanned the flame of mutual love, and more closely bound them together, than this common work with its attendant joys and sorrows.

Alas ! gradually the religion prevailing among the early believers lost much of its spiritual character, and so the world was admitted into the Church. Men have since tried to establish Churches kept perfectly free from the worldly element, but none have succeeded. Let us be wise, and remain in the Churches to which we respectively belong as long as we are allowed to seek the spiritual welfare of those with whom we are ecclesiastically connected. But you need spiritual fellowship with the spiritually-minded. Those who surrendered to Christ on the day of Pentecost continued to join in the established worship in the temple, but also met those who were like-minded with themselves in separate circles for more intimate communion. As your spiritual life grows, your spiritual instinct will move you to do the same.

Look upon these separate circles as parts of the great body of believers scattered all over the world. Cultivate a catholic spirit, by lovingly embracing as brothers and sisters all who have surrendered to Christ, to whatever nation, or Church, or class in society they may belong. The Spirit of adoption

¹ Col. i. 6.

² Acts ii. 46.

is a widening, not a narrowing spirit. Beware of the narrowing influences which small circles easily engender. It makes you live a sickly, not a healthy Christian life.

Study the spirit pervading the Gospels and the Epistles. Let it fill you. Let it separate you from what is worldly, and unite you to whatever is spiritual in whomsoever and wheresoever you may meet with it.

Let God's Spirit purify, elevate, deepen, and broaden your sympathies.

XXI.

CONSECRATION.

“Whose I am and whom I serve.”—ACTS xxvii. 23.

SURRENDER to Christ brings both pardon and the Spirit of adoption. We are pardoned for the sake of being adopted. The *act* of adoption is followed by the *life* of adoption, and the life of *adoption* is the life of *consecration*.

Christ, the Son, was pre-eminently the Consecrated One. His baptism with the Holy Spirit coincided with the Father's declaration that He was His beloved Son, and the response of the Son to this declaration, was His filial consecration to the Father.

Being filled with the Father's Spirit, He was filled with the Father's love. It was His love to man which specially marked Him as the Son of God. He was the perfect manifestation of the Father's love towards a perishing world. Through His love in life and death the Father opened for us the way of salvation. So Christ's consecration to

His Father manifested itself in His consecrating Himself to the salvation of the world. The one temptation to which He was subject all His life long, was to shrink from consecrating Himself to the will of the Father and the good of man. When this temptation culminated in Gethsemane, it tended' to bring out, more than ever before, the Spirit of consecration dwelling in Him.

When those who surrendered to Christ on the day of Pentecost were baptized with the Spirit of adoption, they were, like Christ, baptized with the Spirit of consecration. They were anointed with the same Spirit with whom Christ was anointed when He was baptized by John the Baptist.¹ And moved by the Spirit, as Christ was, they spontaneously and instinctively consecrated themselves to the will of God and the good of their fellow-men.

They became partakers of the love of God and Christ. One love throbbed in the Father, the Son, and the saved sinner. The believers were marked as sons of God by their love to God and man.

There was love to God and man in the saints of the Old Testament. But this love was kept in bondage. It could not freely and fully develop its character. It was wrapped up in the contracted love which still separated nations and individuals from one another. Its spiritual origin was hidden in religious views and habits which were of an elementary character.² God was served

¹ Acts x. 37, 38.

² Gal. iv. 9, 10.

too much as a national God. He was not thought of as a God who is as near to the heathen as to the Jew,¹ much less as a God who intensely desires to save the most wicked. The consecration to God and to man in the Old Testament saints could not rise higher than a consecration to the national interests and welfare of their co-patriots.

In Christ we see the divine love emancipated from these bonds. He loved the heathen as much as the Jew, and sought to save the most degraded. His love embraced the whole world. He emphatically bade His disciples proclaim God's saving love to all mankind. This emancipated, this free and vigorous, this all-embracing love, filled the hearts of those who were baptized with the Holy Spirit. They instinctively understood their calling, and consecrated themselves to God for the salvation of the world.

This involved them in a conflict with the deep-seated prejudices in their own minds and the minds of others. Some of them succumbed in this conflict. They refused to associate with the uncircumcised. But in others the divine love gloriously triumphed, and enabled them to be worthy followers of the Son of God. Sacrificing their own ease and comfort, patiently suffering the opposition of even fellow-believers, they gave themselves unreservedly in the hands of Christ to be used by Him for saving their fellow-men, whosoever they might be. Paul took the lead. He delighted in calling

¹ Rom. iii. 29.

himself the servant of Christ and of his fellow-men, "debtor both to the Greeks and the Barbarians both to the wise and to the unwise."¹ He declared, "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."² How he resembles Christ, as Christ resembled His Father! In Paul, and in all who were like him, we see that indeed the divine love in its fulness was shed abroad in those who had received the Spirit of adoption.³

Without the love which enables you fully to consecrate yourself to God and man, you cannot fully realize the filial position to which you were raised when you surrendered to Christ and received pardon and the Spirit. *The life which the Spirit breathes in us is by its nature a life of consecration.* The three thousand shared in this life as soon as they surrendered to Christ. This was the most marvellous display of the Spirit's power upon earth. They had not, by a long and laborious process, to grow into this life. Instinctively and spontaneously they at once began to live it. Of course, there was growth in this life. Some things had to be learnt and others unlearnt. As light increased they would the better see what a life of consecration embraces, and what it rejects. As love increased the sacrifice of self would deepen. But *essentially* the life

¹ Rom. i. 1, 14, xv. 16; 2 Cor. iv. 5.

² 1 Cor. ix. 19, 22.

³ Rom. v. 5.

of consecration was there from the first. The life which the Spirit originated was no other than that of consecration.

Should the life born of the Spirit of adoption not be from the first a life of consecration, then consecration can never be added to it afterwards. But just as the believer may be ignorant about his adoption, and even act contrary to it, so that he lives without filial trust and joy; so he may be ignorant about the consecrated character of the new life God has given him, and even live an unconsecrated life. We *are*, by the Spirit's indwelling, living and holy sacrifices, and yet we have to *present ourselves* as such to God.¹ The new life in us *is* unlike the worldly life, and yet we are exhorted "not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, that we may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."² We are to *accept* the position to which God has raised us by His Spirit, and to *maintain* it, in conflict with self, the world, and the devil.

Christ was called in the wilderness and in Gethsemane by a definite act to consecrate Himself to His Father; so we, too, are sometimes called definitely to consecrate ourselves to Christ and His Father. This helps the life of consecration to strike deeper root, and to bear more abundant fruit. But the Spirit of consecration is always present in us, even though we should not obey Him. If we but

¹ Rom. xii. 1.

² Rom. xii. 2, 3.

walk in Christ as we *accepted* Him,—if but our life be one continuous surrender to Him, even as His life was an unbroken surrender to His Father,—we are sure to live as it becomes consecrated men and women.¹

The teaching that the consecrated life can only be reached some time after one's surrender to Christ, and that it raises one to a higher class of believers, is erroneous. It lowers the estimate one should have of the life to which he is called from the very moment he accepts Christ as his Saviour. It leads men to seek by some extraordinary process what is to be had through simple faith. It creates the idea that the consecrated life is something which should strike by its extraordinary character; while, on the contrary, it resembles the life of Christ, which was the most natural, simple, and child-like life ever lived by man. This erroneous teaching easily betrays believers into many a practical and doctrinal error.

It is owing, not to the essential character of the life born of the Spirit, but to the low conception prevailing concerning it, that, as a rule, people come to see what a consecrated life means only *after* they have for some time been believers.

Another error you have to avoid is, *that a fully consecrated life is a sinless life*. As long as you live, the flesh will lust against the Spirit.² By faith you may be enabled not to yield to the flesh, still it is

¹ Col. ii. 6, 7.

² Gal. v. 17.

there, defiling you by its suggestions, and necessitating continual pardon and cleansing. As your consecrated life grows, the light increases by which you detect the evil which before escaped notice, and so you see the need of pardon and cleansing with regard even to unknown sins. Your progress in the spiritual life is no safeguard against sinning. The most advanced are exposed to temptations, and need as much God's grace to overcome them as any new beginner. Indeed, one of the chief marks of true progress in the consecrated life is a deepening sense of one's weakness and entire dependence upon God.

Continue to be the helpless but trusting one you were when first you fully surrendered to Christ, and the Spirit of adoption will enable you to live the life of consecration befitting a child of God.

XXII.

CONFESSING CHRIST.

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.”—MATT. x. 33.

YOU confess Christ by confessing *the relation in which you stand to Him since you surrendered to Him*. He has made you by the Spirit of adoption a son and heir of God, as He Himself is the Son and heir of God; and you confess Him when you confess the relation you thus hold to Him, and through Him to His Father.¹

When Christ was upon earth He was the only one in whom the Spirit of sonship dwelt, and who lived with regard to God a life of filial trust and obedience. Those who knew Him, even His disciples, lacked His Spirit. He was trusted, but not understood by His disciples. They needed the Spirit of sonship to comprehend the Son of God. While a mystery to them, He was an offence to the

¹ Rom. viii. 17.

leading men of His time. They hated Him because He confessed that He stood related to God, as the Son to the Father.¹ This confession was the immediate cause of His death.²

You are to follow Christ's example. In a world which cannot understand how man can be related to God as a child to his father, you have to confess that you have entered this relation since your surrender to Christ.³ You have to confess Christ as the Saviour who restored you to the lost blessing which man enjoyed when sin had not yet separated him from God.

You have to confess that God's Son became man, and lived the filial life in a human manner, in order to communicate this life to man, and that He imparted it to *you* since you surrendered to Him. The confession that *you* are a child of God is intimately related to Christ's confession, that *He* was the Son of God. Indeed, He regards all those who thus confess Him and His Father as the elder brother regards the younger brothers.⁴ By confessing Christ you confess to belong to the divine family, of which God is the Father, and Christ the first-born Son. There is no more significant and honourable act than the act of confessing Christ.

Who are they who have thus to confess Christ? All who have surrendered to Him, and have received through Him the Spirit of adoption. None can

¹ John v. 17, 18.

² Matt. xxvi. 63-66.

³ Gal. iii. 26, iv. 1-7.

⁴ Rom. viii. 29; Heb. ii. 11.

call Christ "Lord," none can say that He reigns in them as the Lord who saved them, but those who have in them the witness of the Spirit that they are sons of God.¹ Without this testimony of the Spirit one's confession of Christ must, at the most, be a very incomplete thing. Should you confess having received pardon through Christ, and not be able to confess having received the Spirit of adoption, then you do not confess Christ as He is presented to you in the gospel, namely, as the Son of God who raises all who surrender to Him to the position of children of God. You then show that you know neither Him nor the position and calling of those who are saved by Him. God cannot accomplish by *your* imperfect confession what He intends working out by our confessing Christ.

Suppose that Christ had not been quite sure about His sonship, how could He have confessed it in a world which hated and resisted Him on account of this very confession? How could He have spoken and acted as the Son of the Father? How could He have effected what could only be effected by one who really was the Son of God? If you are not sure of having become a child of God through Christ, you cannot confess this among men who cannot but misapprehend and dislike such a confession. You cannot behave as one who is conscious of being a child of God through Christ. You cannot be instrumental in bringing about the good which

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 3.

God can only work by those who really are His children. Without full assurance of faith, which is one with the clearly understood testimony of the Spirit in us, none can confess his sonship through Christ; just as Christ Himself could not have confessed His peculiar relation to His Father without the witness of the Spirit.

If you have the testimony of the Spirit in you, then the confession of Christ *follows spontaneously*. You then confess Christ, not because you are told to do so, but because you cannot help doing so. You *must* let the secret out. You *must* tell those who have led you to Christ, that you have been saved by Him. You *must* tell it to those whom you love and wish to be saved. You *must* tell it to those who inquire about the cause of your change of conduct. Should you try to hide from others your relation to Christ, you would not only disobey Christ's command, but also repress the impulse felt within. And if you should persevere in this, the result is sure to be most disastrous. God's Spirit will then be prevented from doing His intended work in you. You will lose the peace and joy you had when He entered your heart; and be unfit for the life, the conflict and the victory which the saved sinner is called to share with the Saviour. Therefore do not grieve the Spirit; but yield to His impulse, and gladly confess Christ.

Do this from the very first. Those who surrendered to Christ on the pentecostal day, and

afterwards in the days of the apostles, *at once* boldly confessed their relation to the universally hated Christ. They were publicly baptized, and at once joined the fellowship meetings, which were not secret, but open gatherings.¹ At that time there was a fierce conflict between the confessors of Christ, who were few in number, and the enemies of Christ, who were the vast majority, and had on their side the men of influence. The new converts at once threw themselves into this conflict. All joined in it, both men and women, by boldly confessing Christ.² Each had his or her share in the domestic and social suffering entailed by this conflict. But all behaved as true heroes. No amount of suffering could damp their ardour. When they had to flee from Jerusalem they eagerly confessed and proclaimed Christ wherever they were scattered.³ Persecution and suffering only made their confession of Christ more emphatic. Do likewise. Identify yourself from the first with those who feel called by God to confess their being saved by Christ. Take your stand among those who are worthy of the name of "confessors of Christ."

Nothing is more simple than confessing Christ. The Philippian jailer, for instance, was an ignorant heathen, but he knew that since his surrender to Christ he was pardoned and made a new creature. Could anything be more simple than just to confess this? A little child, who is really saved by Christ,

¹ Cor. xiv. 23.² Acts viii. 3,³ Acts viii. 3, 4.

can say, "I know that Jesus has made me a child of God." There is something very attractive in the simple confession of Christ by one who is ignorant of the conventional terms used by religious people, and who, in his own natural and simple manner, confesses the fact of his being saved by Christ. In many an instance this simple confession has been used by God for the salvation of those who had long resisted the gospel they had heard from others, even from eminent preachers.

By confessing Christ you publish the gospel. Just as the preaching of the gospel by one who speaks as a saved man is a confession of Christ, so confessing Christ is indeed preaching the gospel. We are told that the Antiochians in Pisidia, as soon as they had surrendered to Christ, published the word of the Lord throughout all the region.¹ I suppose most of them were still very ignorant, and published the gospel just by telling the story of their own salvation through Christ. God uses very simple means for the saving of the lost. The most efficient are the most simple.² Just confess Christ in a natural and childlike manner, whenever God opens to you the way of doing so, and you will be the means of effecting much good. None spoke in a simpler manner than Christ.

What gives effect to one's confession of Christ is *the life which proves it to be true.* Only by His life could Christ prove the truth of His confession

¹ Acts xiii. 49.

² 1 Cor. ii. 1-5.

concerning the relation between Him and His Father. He appealed to His works, which were such as only the Son of God could do.¹ He taught His disciples that they were in this manner to prove to the world their unique position and calling.² The fruit of the Spirit, such as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, is to prove that you are, through Christ, possessed of a Spirit which the world lacks.³ Your confession should interpret your life, and your life should corroborate your confession. People may refuse to see the light shining in your arguments for the truth, but they cannot shut their eyes against the light shining in a Christlike life. A confession of Christ without a corresponding life will be powerless either to attract or repel the opponents of the truth, and will throw a stumbling-block in the way of those who sincerely seek it; but a confession with which the life harmonizes will have an irresistible power, either of attraction or of repulsion, and will be a beacon of light to those who desire to know where to find safety and rest. One Christian whose life is thoroughly consistent with his confession is worth more than hundreds of books written in defence of Christianity. The apologetics written by the Spirit of God on behalf of Jesus Christ are the consistent lives of thoroughly saved men and women and children.⁴ Seek above all to excel in a

¹ John x. 37, 38.

² Matt. v. 13-16.

³ Gal. v. 22.

⁴ 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3.

life resembling the life of Christ. It will add infinite power to every word you speak in His behalf.

The great need has always been and still is such confessors of Christ. The world cannot be profited by your confessing to what Church or ecclesiastical or theological party you belong. It wants to see in you the life born of the Spirit through Christ, as the invincible argument for the truth that Christ is the Saviour of the sinner. Are you possessed of this life? Then humbly, but boldly, confess that Christ has saved you from the dominion of sin, and made you a child of God. Your confession, illuminated by your life, will surely be made a means of blessing to others. Bear with the opposition you might meet with on account of your clear and full confession of Christ. Be ready to suffer for confessing Christ as your Saviour, as He was ready to suffer for confessing God as His Father. And as Christ, when rejected by men, looked forward with great joy to the time when the Father would justify Him before men and angels;¹ so never forget, while confessing Christ in an unsympathizing world, His promise to you, "Who-soever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven, and before the angels of God."²

¹ Matt. xxvi. 64; Heb. xii. 2.

² Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8.

N O T E.

On page 162 I said of the early Christians : "They were publicly baptized, and at once joined the fellowship meetings, which were not secret, but open gatherings." In these fellowship meetings I include the brotherly meal or supper, which showed to the non-Christian spectators the love which united the believers into one body. There was nothing in it which made it resemble the secret societies of the heathen with their secret transactions, to which a mysterious virtue was ascribed. It resembled the sacred meals, which were common among the Jews and Gentiles, and formed part of their public worship. Luke speaks of it as *a breaking of bread*, as the Jews were wont to call their common meals (Acts ii. 46, xx. 7). Jude calls it a *love-meal*, an *agape* (love), because it expressed and fostered the mutual love of the Christians. Paul calls it *the Lord's meal or supper*, *kyriakon deipnon*, on account of its relation to the Lord's death and advent (1 Cor. xi. 20, 26), just as the first day of the week was called *the Lord's day*, *kyriake hemera*, on account of its relation to the Lord's resurrection (Rev. i. 10). Not only was every brotherly meal from its commencement partaken of under a sense of the Lord's gracious presence, it also ended with the ceremony instituted by the Lord at the last meal before He died. This ceremony pointed the Christians back to the atoning death of the Lord, which opened the way to the Christian dispensation, and forward to Christ's coming to fulfil all the unfulfilled promises connected with this dispensation (Luke xxii. 20 ; Heb. ix. 15, 28 ; 1 Cor. xi. 26).

PART III.
ON WALKING BY THE SPIRIT.

XXIII.

THE SPIRITUAL MAN.

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal.”—1 COR. iii. 1.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one.”—GAL. vi. 1.

There are spiritual and there are carnal Christians. Saying this, I use the term “Christian,” not in the traditional, but original sense, and apply it only to those who profess to have surrendered to Christ.

The spiritual Christian is one in whom, as a rule, *the spirit of Christ prevails*, which is, with regard to God, a spirit of filial trust and obedience, and, with regard to man, the spirit of brotherly love, humility, and self-sacrifice. Many Christians in Corinth lacked this spirit, and were called by Paul carnal, babes in Christ. Though Christians, they lacked the power needed to walk as Christians. In order so to walk, they had to be delivered from the bandages which enwrapped the Christian life, and prevented it from developing itself freely and fully. They were sickly babes, not healthy sons and daughters. Instead

of the spiritual prevailing over the carnal, the carnal prevailed over the spiritual. They walked in many respects as carnal men, as the men of this world. Remember the words of Paul, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk after the manner of men? For when one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"¹

The Christians in the Galatian Churches began their Christian course as spiritual men and women.² They enthusiastically loved Paul and one another, and gave free scope to the spirit of Christ dwelling in them. But many of them became enamoured with the forms of a religion which belonged to a bygone dispensation. They attached an inordinate value to things which were meant to be but the shadows of the things we possess in Christ.³ They submitted themselves to the law of Moses, which was but the tutor to bring us unto Christ, as if they had not yet found Christ. Remember the words of Paul, "Now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known of God, how turn ye back unto the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again. Ye observe days and months, and seasons and years."⁴ They virtually

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 2-4.

² Col. ii. 16, 17.

³ Gal. iii. 3, 4.

⁴ Gal. iv. 9, 10.

turned away from the fulness of life, which flows from Christ to every trusting heart through the Spirit. The result was that from spiritual they became carnal Christians, in whom the flesh prevailed over the spirit; they became "desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another, biting and devouring one another."¹

The disciples of Christ while in fellowship with Him upon earth were not, in the later sense of the word, spiritual men. In many respects the carnal in them prevailed over the spiritual. The spiritual was kept in bondage by the carnal. They showed their want of spiritual power by their lack of trust in God, their want of love to one another and to a perishing world, and by their carnal ambition. Of all this they were delivered after Christ's resurrection and ascension. Without this deliverance they would have been unfit for the ministry of the gospel, and the important position they had to occupy in the Church of God.

The Old Testament saints, however excellent in many respects, could not develop the spiritual life as we see it manifested since the outpouring of the Spirit. Compared with those under the new dispensation, they were, in many respects, carnal, not spiritual. There was in them spiritual life, life born of the Spirit, but it was not yet emancipated from all carnal restrictions. It was a poor and elementary life compared with the rich and mature life of the

¹ Gal. v. 15, 26.

New Testament ; just as the Old Testament worship is called by Paul poor and beggarly.¹ For instance, for the nourishment of their spiritual life, they felt dependent upon certain places and times, and persons and exercises which were counted sacred. But the New Testament saint was so conscious of his filial union with the heavenly Father, that the Father's presence made all times and places equally sacred to him, and equally fit for full fellowship, without the necessary mediation of any human being.² As the ancients felt narrowed and restricted in their fellowship with God, so it was in their fellowship with men. Their love was too impotent to reach to the lost. It lacked as yet the energy born of the Spirit of Christ. They left the surrounding Gentiles in a state of ignorance concerning God, only hoping that when the Messiah should have come, the light shining in Israel would enlighten the nations to the uttermost ends of the earth. Christ's Spirit had to come down and dwell in the hearts of those who surrendered to Him, in order to emancipate the spiritual life from its Old Testament restraints, and engender in man a life resembling His own, and infinitely surpassing what any human being could have anticipated.

Christ was the first wholly spiritual man. The spiritual life manifested itself in Him entirely free from all carnal limitations. He lived infinitely above the level of the Old Testament saints. He was fully conscious of possessing the reality of which the

¹ Gal. iv. 9, 10 ; comp. Heb. vii. 18, 19. ² John iv. 20-24.

teachings of the law and the prophets were but faint shadows. He knew that He came not to establish another religion marked, as all religions had hitherto been, by national restrictions, and inseparably bound to sacred things and places and persons. He came to subvert the old religious systems, by establishing in the hearts of men the kingdom of God, which is the real fulfilment of what those systems imperfectly typified. He came to introduce the reign of the Spirit, by whom man is emancipated from all sinful and carnal trammels, and enters the kingdom of God by being united to God as a child to his father. He was the first spiritual man, because He was the first who had consciously and fully entered the life of FILIAL trust and obedience.

But He was more, infinitely more, than the spiritual man. Adam, as his history tells us, was not a man in whom the spiritual prevailed over the carnal—the spirit over the soul. At the moment when his future history was to be decided, he did not rise to the higher platform upon which henceforth his life was to move. He did not, by casting himself upon God, and receiving His Spirit in full measure, prevail over the flesh, and become a spiritual man. Christ, however, by living in entire dependence upon the Spirit of God, proved Himself to be the spiritual man. But if He had not been more than this, it would have profited us nothing. As the Son of God, He had to resume His glory at the Father's right hand, in order thence to manifest Himself as life-

giving Spirit by communicating to us the Spirit by which He prevailed over the flesh when upon earth.¹ Remember the words of Paul: "The first man, Adam, became a living soul (Greek, *psyche*). The last Adam became life-giving Spirit. Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but which is psychical;² then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."³

Thus spiritual Christians are those who not only have *received* Christ's Spirit, but also so *yield* to the Spirit that He prevails in them over the flesh, and enables them to reflect the image of Christ.

The apostles incessantly directed the mind's eye towards Christ as the perfect manifestation of the spiritual life, and exhorted *all* Christians, even ignorant women and children and down-trodden slaves, to imitate His example.⁴ And thousands *did* imitate it. Though, as a rule, belonging to the illiterate, the poor, the labouring and despised portion of society, they stood out infinitely above the corrupt mass which society then was, by their pure,

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.

² The original is both here and 1 Cor. ii. 14, not physical (*φυσικός*), *natural*, from *physis*, *nature*; but psychical (*ψυχικός*), from *psyche*, *soul*. See note 2, p. 46.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 45-49.

⁴ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

their noble, their godlike lives. They became the light of the world, the salt of the earth. They were in the midst of an astonished world, which could not understand the secret of their lives, living miracles, pointing back to the great miracle of the incarnation of the Son of God, whose incarnate life had become theirs also.

Oh! for such men and women in this present day to prove to a sceptical world that Jesus Christ, indeed, saves from sin, and changes the saved sinner after His own image!

Are *you* a Christian? Then may the Lord enable you, at whatever cost, to take your place among those who are not carnal, but spiritual.

XXIV.

JUSTIFIED

“Ye are justified.”—2 COR. vi. 11.

JUSTIFICATION is a *divine act*, just as pardon and adoption are. It is one of those extremely significant acts by which God most emphatically reveals His saving grace to the sinner.

It is, although an act of grace, yet a *judicial act*. It is the duty of the judge to declare whether one who is arraigned before him is guilty or free of guilt. God in declaring the sinner free from guilt justifies him.¹

This divine declaration is not based on man's moral and religious condition. When God justifies the sinner, He does not declare him to be morally and religiously blameless. He justifies the ungodly.²

Neither is it based on the re-established relation between God and man. When God justifies man, He does not say, “I pronounce you free of guilt, because I find you rightly related to me, as a child

¹ Rom. viii. 33.

² Rom. iv. 5.

to his father." Justification does not rest upon adoption. You are not justified because you are adopted.

Justification refers to the removal of the judicial hindrance in re-establishing the original relation between God and man. There is a moral hindrance preventing the reunion between God and man, arising from the alienation of the heart from God by reason of sin. This God removes out of the way, not by the grace of justification, but by the grace of regeneration. God does not declare you free of guilt because He finds you regenerated, though justification and regeneration always go together. The one is not conceivable without the other, but you are not justified because you are regenerated.

You meet with justification *not on the farther path of the Christian life, but at the entrance*, where regeneration becomes its inseparable companion. And as you are but once regenerated, you are but once justified. Having been justified, you may act contrary to the position and calling of a justified sinner, and suffer accordingly ; still God numbers you among the justified. Paul, who has gone into the truth of justification deeper than any other apostle, never exhorts those who walk unworthy of their position and calling, to regain justification as a lost blessing. God never repents of having justified the sinner. If justified once, you are justified for ever.

In justifying, God lays the divine foundation of the Christian life. It is altogether divine. It is wholly a divine act. But the superstructure which is to be reared upon the divine foundation is both divine and human, depending upon the action and reaction between the divine and the human, the human yielding to and being shaped by the divine. The superstructure, not the foundation, is imperfect, and requires repeated correction in this life.

You ask what the hindrance is to the removal of which justification refers. *It is not the recurring condemnation for each recurring sin.* Those who are adopted, and even far advanced in the Christian life, know this hindrance in their fellowship with the Father. Of course, without their being in a justified state, they could not be delivered from this hindrance; nay, without being justified, they would never be conscious of such a hindrance. Only the justified know what fellowship with God is, and what its hindrances are. Justification does not deal with the condemnation felt *after*, but *before* one's adoption into the family of the heavenly Father.

The hindrance to filial fellowship with God, which is removed by justification, is *the sense of condemnation inherent in the unsaved human race.* Unless this sense is removed, you cannot enter upon the path of the Christian life, which is the life of filial fellowship with God. This sense of condem-

nation keeps man away from God ; and nothing can remove this separation, and reunite God and man, but God's justifying act attested to the soul by His Spirit.

To what do you owe the condemnation which is common to all mankind ? Not to the sins which you have committed, and for which you are personally responsible. You must go deeper to find the root of the matter. This common condemnation is due to the connection of each with Adam, our common progenitor. Subjection to death is the mark of this common condemnation : even the innocent babe is subject to it.

Now, if God is to go to the root of this thing, how is He to annihilate this sense of condemnation which is common to all, and which keeps all, terror-bound, away from Him ? He is to break your connection with Adam—as to the matter of sin—by uniting you to another Head in whom the condemnation incurred by Adam has been annihilated. That other Head is Christ. He voluntarily united Himself with the condemned human race ; and though individually the holy and righteous One, He, by reason of this union, submitted to death,—the mark of guilty man,—and died as a condemned criminal. But by His resurrection and exaltation He was declared by His Father free from guilt. He was thus justified by the Father.

Without this justification Christ would have been

lost with the human race. He was rescued by the Father from a condition which made His wonted intercourse with God impossible, and was restored by His resurrection to the full bliss of filial fellowship with God which He enjoyed before the foundation of the world. And now, just as really as Christ by union with you entered into your condemned state, you may by union with Him be saved from this condemned condition and enter into the justified state in which He lives with the Father.¹

How is this union with Christ effected? You share in Adam's condemnation by a naturally unavoidable connection with him. A deeper union with Christ is brought about on the part of Christ by love, and on your part by trust. It is both in its character and in its effect the most perfect union conceivable. There are thousands who experience this union and its blessed consequences without knowing the deeper connection of things as we have just shown it. They are in a justified state by faith in Christ without ever having heard the word justification. Many who would miserably fail if you examine them about the doctrine of justification, rejoice in the consciousness that since their surrender to Christ they are delivered from the sense of condemnation which once kept them away from God, and that they ever have a free and peaceful access to the heavenly Father.²

¹ Rom. iv. 25.

² Rom. v. 1.

When they are overtaken by sin, and again troubled by a sense of condemnation, this does not necessarily obscure, much less efface, the fact of their being admitted to filial fellowship with God. It is by a fresh act of faith in the grace of God, who through Christ raised them from the state of condemnation common to all, that the sense of condemnation, which as a cloud comes between them and their heavenly Father, passes away again. Should a sin committed after justification again cast one back into the condemnation, which shuts the *unsaved* out from filial fellowship with God, then despair would follow, and he who had been once saved would sink down to a lower depth of misery than the unsaved. A child feels more keenly condemned when he offends his father than the stranger does, just because he knows that though his communion with his father is disturbed, yet he has not lost the position of a child in the family. Justification admits the sinner to the blessing of adoption, and secures to him for ever the position of a child in the family of the heavenly Father.

As no one can by his own efforts or good works efface the sentence of condemnation under which all mankind labours, this justification is said not to be our own, or one obtained by our own works.¹

As God is the source of this blessing, it is called

¹ Phil. iii. 9 ; Rom. iii. 20 ; Gal. ii. 16.

God's justification,¹ or the justification which is from God.²

As we obtain it by faith in God and Christ, it is called the justification which is *by faith in God*, or *by faith in Christ*, or simply *by faith*.³

As Christ could not become the Justified One without becoming for our sakes like a condemned one, dying the death of the guilty, we are said to be justified *by His blood*, or *by faith in His blood*.⁴

And as Christ suffered for us in obedience to His Father, we are said to be justified *by His obedience*.⁵

Paul was deeply impressed with the truth of Christ's becoming identified with the condemned sinner, in order that the sinner might become identified with Him, the Justified One. He thus expresses himself about this matter, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."⁶ "God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."⁷

It is of the utmost importance rightly to under-

¹ For the *two* English words *justification* and *righteousness* you have *one* Greek word. This word should have been translated by *justification*, and not by *righteousness*, in Rom. i. 17, iii. 21, 22, 25, 26; 2 Cor. iii. 9; Phil. iii. 9.

² Phil. iii. 9; Rom. iii. 22, i. 17.

³ Rom. i. 17, iii. 22, 26; Phil. iii. 9.

⁴ Rom. iii. 25, v. 9.

⁶ Gal. iii. 13, 15.

⁵ Rom. v. 19.

⁷ 2 Cor. v. 21.

stand man's justification through faith in Jesus Christ, as it opens the way to our right understanding of man's sanctification through faith in Jesus Christ. The former is the foundation of the latter. They are both one unbroken whole.

There is one question I wish to answer before I conclude. When God in justifying us annuls the sentence of condemnation passed upon the human race, does He thereby renounce His judicial functions with regard to the justified sinner? Is the justified sinner henceforth exempted from punishment though he should continue in sin? By no means! As, notwithstanding Christ's vicarious suffering, no sinner can be pardoned without turning away from sin, so no justified man can be pardoned without turning away from the sin to which he may have yielded. But mark; God exercises His judicial functions with regard to the justified man on an infinitely higher platform. He deals with him not only as the king with his subject, but also as the father with his child. The unpardoned sinner is kept out of God's kingdom. The justified, while connected with any sin, is kept, not out of the kingdom, but out of that intimate communion with God which brings peace and joy, and makes us fit instruments for the good of others. In order to call His child back from sin the Father sometimes *chastises* him. But every chastisement is not caused by wilfully committed sin, or sin to which the child of God is unconsciously subject. God

often uses suffering for the purpose of perfecting the spiritual life of His children. So it was with Christ Himself.¹ With regard to such suffering, Paul says, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."²

¹ Heb. ii. 10, v. 8.

² 2 Cor. iv. 17.

XXV.

SANCTIFIED.

“Sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.”—1 COR. i. 2.

“Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”—2 COR. vii. 1.

GOD *justifies* the sinner by absolving him from the guilt to which all mankind is subject. For what purpose? To *sanctify* him—that is, *to set him apart for God’s worship and service*. Every one thus set apart is called a *saint* or a *holy one*.

Thus sanctification is as much *a divine act* as justification. You are set apart by God Himself for worship and service. You are made a priest in God’s sanctuary,¹ a vessel in God’s house,² a servant of God.³

Your sanctification is coincident with your justification. In its nature, not in time, it follows justification. God cannot justify you without sanctifying you. Whom He pardons, He adopts; and adoption involves worship and service.

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 5.

² 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21.

³ Rom. vi. 22.

You are sanctified *in Christ*, just as you are justified *in Christ*. *He* is made to you both justification and sanctification.¹ You are both justified and sanctified *in His name*.² If Christ were not the Justified One, you could not be justified; and if *He* were not the Sanctified One, you could not be sanctified. He was justified because of His cancelling by His death human guilt, to which He had made Himself subject; and having been justified He was sanctified—that is, set apart at God's right hand³ for the position He holds as Son of God.⁴ You are justified and sanctified by your connection with Christ. By being united to Him, you are raised in Him to the *position* of a justified and sanctified person.

When Christ, having been baptized, rose from the waters of Jordan, He was sanctified or set apart by the Father for the work He had to do upon earth; and so, when He arose from the dead, He was raised by the Spirit of sanctification to the throne of God, and thus set apart or ordained by God for His heavenly work. Christ's justification and sanctification were the *result* of His mediatorial life and death and resurrection. But you *start* upon your Christian career as a justified and sanctified person. Your sanctification does not at all depend upon your growth in the Christian life. There is

¹ 1 Cor. i. 30.

² 1 Cor. vi. 11.

³ Acts ii. 36; Col. iii. 1.

⁴ Rom. i. 4 (see the original, which has not *declared*, but *ordained*).

no Christian life possible without being first sanctified in Christ.

Paul calls *all* believers saints, even should their walk be at variance with the position they hold as saints. They sin as *saints*, and suffer for their sins as *saints*. So their bodies remain the temples of the Holy Spirit, though they should desecrate them by impurity.¹ Though they should not behave as the justified, adopted, and sanctified should do, yet such a conduct, with all its evil consequences, cannot annihilate the divine act of justification, adoption, and sanctification. Though their sins are most severely dealt with by God,² yet they are not finally rejected by Him. This they owe to their union with Christ, just as they owe every other Christian blessing to their being united to Him.

But sanctification is not only an *act* of God, just as justification is; it is also, what justification never is, a *divine process*. God sets the justified person apart for worship and service by entering into his heart through His Spirit, as into His abode.³ God's indwelling Spirit manifests Himself in us as the Spirit of worship and service. He changes us into worshippers and servants of God, shows us what is incompatible with God's worship and service, and enables us to separate ourselves from it. He forms in us holy habits of worship and

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17, vi. 19, 20.

² 1 Cor. xi. 32; 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.

³ Eph. ii. 22.

service, and deepens in us the spirit of adoration and obedience. Sanctification as a divine *act* is due to the *entrance* of the Spirit in us; and sanctification as a divine *process* is due to the *indwelling* of the Spirit in us. Peter calls our sanctification *the sanctification of the Spirit*.¹

Does this process ever end in perfection here below? Never. In a relative sense we may be *wholly* or *entirely* sanctified,² if, as far as our light goes, we are enabled by the Spirit to consecrate, *without any reserve*, body, soul, and spirit to God. But we shall never be *absolutely* perfect in this life. The nearer we approach perfection, the more deeply we shall be conscious of our imperfections and of the need of Christ's cleansing blood.

Hitherto we have looked at sanctification from the *divine* side; let us now look at it from the *human* side. God sanctifies those who *by faith surrender to Christ*. If I am conscious of having surrendered to Him, then I must hold to it that I am set apart by God for worship and service; that I am His priest and servant. Only by faith I enter into the relation of a sanctified person. It is not a faith which is added to, but contained in the faith which accepts pardon; just as the gift of sanctification is not added to, but contained in the gift of justification. Christ, and not justification or sanctification, is the object of faith; but He is a perfect Saviour; and so, by surrendering to Him, I obtain through

¹ 1 Pet. i. 2.

² 1 Thess. v. 23.

Him, as an undivided whole, justification, adoption, and sanctification.

Being sanctified by God through faith I must behave as a sanctified person. I must present myself to God a living and holy sacrifice, and yield my members to Him as instruments of righteousness.¹ I must accept and maintain by faith the position of a sanctified person. Without this I miss the blessing accruing to me by the divine act of sanctification. By doing this I grow in a life which accords with the position of a sanctified person. This attitude and life of faith, with regard to the divinely finished *act* of sanctification, promotes within me the divine *process* of sanctification.

By holding to it that God *has* set me apart for His worship and service, I can, by faith in the indwelling Spirit of sanctification, keep myself apart, and thus cleanse myself from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.² Living a holy life is nothing but acting out the faith that I am called by God to be holy. Faith holds that the sanctifying power of the indwelling Spirit is present, and must prevail, even though, in the hour of trial and conflict, nothing of this power should be consciously felt. It is not the faith which *feels*, but which *rests*, that prevails. "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."³

As God sanctifies the justified man to a life of holy worship and service, so He often sanctifies or

¹ Rom. xii. 1, vi. 13.

² 2 Cor. vii. 1.

³ Isa. xxx. 15.

sets apart the sanctified man for some special purpose. In this case you are guaranteed a special influence from the sanctifying Spirit dwelling in you. But this influence, too, cannot always be felt. In order to work in you untrammelled, it needs a restful trust in Him whom you obey. The less you feel of the power which is at work in you the better perhaps. Only obey by faith. At God's bidding at once stretch out even the withered hand.

We live a holy life, or do a holy work, or fight a holy conflict, only by trustfully looking to Christ.

XXVI.

THE THREE FACTORS.

‘With the *mind* I myself serve the law of God.’—ROM. vii. 25.

“I see *another law in my members*, warring against the law of my mind.”—ROM. vii. 23.

“The law of *the Spirit of life in Christ* hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”—ROM. viii. 2.

THERE are three factors to be taken account of in order to understand the Christian life. These are—the *mind*, the *flesh*, and *the Spirit of Christ*.

In the disciples of Christ we see the mind and the flesh in conflict with one another; neither gaining a lasting victory, until they were filled with the Spirit of the risen Christ: and since then their lives proved the victorious power of Christ’s Spirit over the flesh. Their spiritual connection with the risen Christ worked in them a more remarkable change than had hitherto been experienced by man. It gave rise to a new life for

which the heart of man had yearned for ages, and for which God had gradually prepared it, but which was hitherto infinitely beyond the reach of the most godly of men. There were obstacles in the way of reaching it which could only be removed by the risen and exalted Christ.

The disciple of Christ would have thus described his life as it was before, and became since, the resurrection: "From my inmost soul I loved God's law, because it is holy, just, and good.¹ With my mind, which is in the inner man, I felt attached to God and His law, as a loyal servant to his master. I knew of no more honourable position than that of a servant of God.² I desired to live a life which is holy, just, and good, in conformity to the law of God.

"But, alas! there was another law, another power, working in me. It was the law of sin. Its seat is in the outer man, the flesh, the members of my body.³ It aroused in me, especially through contact with the visible world, carnal desires and passions. While they worked in me, I felt as an impotent captive, led away by the strong conqueror.⁴ True, they had to give way again to the deeper desires and passions which emanated from my renewed mind; they could not destroy the divine life in me; but, alas! while they were raging, I was as a chained prisoner, shut up in a dark dungeon; and when the

¹ Rom. vii. 12.

² Rom. vii. 22, 26.

³ Rom. vii. 18, 23.

⁴ Rom. vii. 23.

divine life regained its ascendancy, I could not fully rejoice, because I could not shake off the fear that the moment was approaching when again I would be defeated and led captive by the enemy. My life was an alternation between joy and fear, victory and defeat. Wretched man that I was!

“ Besides this powerful law in the flesh warring with my mind, there was another cause of constant trouble. I knew that God was ever ready to pardon. When He delivered our fathers from Egyptian bondage, He cancelled their guilt by the blood of the paschal lamb; and by the blood of our sacrifices He continued to seal to us the forgiveness of the sins we confessed to Him. Yet I had not that free access to Him which I had to an earthly father and friend whenever I was pardoned by them. The more closely I felt drawn to God, the more deeply I became conscious of a servile fear which I could not overcome. My heart yearned for a closer communion with God. My past sins, though forgiven, again and again came back to my remembrance, especially in times of affliction and at the approach of death, and filled me with terror. The sense of God’s wrath then predominated over the sense of His mercy,¹ and God’s loving countenance was hidden behind a dark cloud which overshadowed my soul. Only occasionally I dared face affliction and death with the joyful prospect of a

¹ Ps. vi. 1, xxxviii. 1; comp. Heb. x. 1-4.

better life.¹ Through fear of death I was all my lifetime subject to bondage.²

“And then what a painful contrast there was between my life and that of Christ, between my pride and His humility, my envy and His love, my timidity and His courage, my dejection and His hopefulness, my want of trust in God and His unbounded confidence in His Father. Just at those critical moments when the divine life, according to the mind’s desire, should have prevailed, I was defeated by the law of sin dominating in my members.

“But what a wonderful change was wrought in me by the risen Christ! I saw Him dying. He did not die as the innocent and beloved Son of God should have died, comforted by His Father and ministered unto by angels. When He tasted death His light became extinguished, and in the terrible darkness He exclaimed: ‘My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?’ If such was the death of the Father’s Son, no wonder I lived in lifelong dread of death.

“Should Christ not have risen again from the dead, then the power of sin, the cause of death, would have proved invincible, and all prospect of deliverance would have vanished for ever. Christ’s death would then have been my death-knell. All hope would have died. I would have become a child of despair—lost—for ever lost.

¹ Ps. xvi. 8-11.

² Heb. ii. 15.

“But Christ triumphantly rose from the dead. I saw Him, the risen One. Not only had all vestige of death’s dominion disappeared, but a divine glory was seen in His every feature and felt in His every word, such as had not been manifested by Him before. And when I gave myself to Him who died and vanquished death for me, He imparted to me His own victorious life. I felt the power of death broken. I no more looked forward to the approach of conquering death, but to the coming of my Redeemer to admit me to the Father’s abode. Owing to this sense of triumph over death, the sense of condemnation and separation from God disappeared altogether. I felt a nearness to God similar to what I had perceived in Christ. I could trust Him as a child trusts his father, just as Christ trusted Him.

“Being made victorious over death I was made victorious over sin. I felt raised to a higher life. There began to abound in me such a love to man and such a trust in God, that pride and envy, timidity and dejection, no more predominated in me. Without effort, just by trusting the risen Christ, I began to live the life which He lived upon earth.

“I felt a new Spirit in me. It was the Spirit of Christ, whom He had promised to give us when He should have returned to His Father after His victory over death and sin. He breathed this Spirit into us after His resurrection, and filled us with Him

after His ascension on the day of Pentecost. What no effort of my own could ever have achieved, that Christ accomplished by imparting His Spirit to me. 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and death.'"

What a deliverance from the power of the flesh has God wrought, through the Spirit of the risen Christ communicated to the believer! As this Spirit dwells both in Christ and the believer, He works in the believer the same triumphant life which marked the Son of God. Paul could not help closing his most important teaching concerning this deliverance, in this rapturous strain: "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor

angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”¹

¹ Rom. viii. 31-39.

XXVII.

FAITH'S RECKONING.

“The death that He died, He died unto sin once ; but the life that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Even so, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof.”—ROM. vi. 10-12.

SINCE your surrender to Christ, you are to reckon yourself as dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ ; and, on this account, you have not to present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but unto God as instruments of righteousness.¹ You are to live as one who is not under the dominion of sin, but of grace.²

Sin is not eradicated in you. It is present in your mortal body.³ It stirs carnal lusts. It always lusts against the Spirit of Christ.⁴ But you are not to obey the lusts awakened by sin. You are to live in obedience to the Spirit of Christ. Thus grace and not sin is to reign in you.

Though Christ's Spirit is present in you, yet,

¹ Rom. vi. 13.

³ Rom. vi. 12.

² Rom. vi. 14.

⁴ Gal. v. 17.

instead of the Spirit the flesh may prevail. So it was with the Galatians. Having received the Spirit when they surrendered to Christ, they obeyed the Spirit. He reigned in them, and manifested His dominion over the flesh by their holy walk. They were devoted to Christ and to one another and abounded in brotherly love. But yielding to the lusts stirred by sin, especially to the desire of mixing something of their own with the grace of God, they grieved the Spirit, and were again led captive by the flesh, from whose dominion they had been delivered. They began "to bite and devour one another," and became "desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another."¹

You, too, are tempted to obey the sinful lusts of the flesh, and thus to allow sin, in some shape, to have dominion over you. In all his Epistles Paul warns believers against this common danger. You may wilfully withdraw from the Spirit and yield to the flesh; but you may also be overcome by the flesh because you do not know how to withstand it. There are those who earnestly resist sin, though unconverted and not trusting Christ for salvation. Their conflict, however, is utterly different from the conflict of faith to which you are called. They depend upon their own strength of will, and every victory they gain adds to their proud sense of self-sufficiency. They know not the character and root

¹ Gal. v. 15, 26.

of sin, and fight not against sin, but against some of its more repulsive or harmful manifestations. The conflict to which you are called is as high above their conflict as the heavens are above the earth. You have no other weapon to fight with than faith; and the victory to be secured is not that of self over sin, but of grace over sin, of Christ's Spirit over the flesh.¹

Paul does not admonish you to overcome sin by fighting it in the common acceptation of the term, but by reckoning yourself as dead in Christ to sin, and made alive in Christ to God.

Mark, you are not to reckon *sin* as dead in you. It is present in you, and will remain present as long as you live. It is not uprooted one day and again implanted the next. Should some evil inclination stir in you, after half a century's silence, it is not a new one, but the old one reappearing.

Mark also, that you are not to reckon yourself as dead to sin, as one who can be as little touched and affected by sin as a dead body can feel the touch of a living being. Then there would be no temptation to sin. Then no believer could be exhorted to be on his guard against sin, and resist it. Even Christ, though He had no sinful body, felt the approach of the tempter, and had to resist him most vigorously. The more you grow in likeness to Christ, the more sensitive you will become to the lusts of the flesh.

¹ Rom. v. 21 ; Gal. v. 16-25.

IN what sense, then, are you to reckon yourself as dead to sin and made alive to God? There was a time when there existed a living relation between you and sin. You were the slave of sin then. Though not given to sin in all its various manifestations, yet you were led captive by it, and kept away from God. But now you are delivered from its dominion. You are no more its slave than a dead person can be called the slave of any one. You are made a servant of God. He owns your life. You are alive to *Him*. *He* is your Master, and not sin.¹

How has this change of relationship been brought about? Not by any effort of yours. You have not fought yourself free from sin. You have not by your powerful will shaken off its dominion. You owe your changed relation towards God and sin entirely to what Christ has done both *for* you and *in* you. You are dead unto sin, and made alive unto God *in Christ Jesus*. Christ made Himself responsible for you. He entered into your state of condemnation. He, by dying, suffered your penalty, and having died, was released from it—was justified.² *His* justification is *your* justification, because He died *your* death. When you surrendered to Him, you were released from your guilt, as if you had died with Christ and risen with Christ. Sin could as little demand from you that you should, by dying, pay the penalty you had incurred, as a master can

¹ Rom. vi. 10-13.

² Rom. vi. 7.

inflict death upon a dead slave. In the matter of your justification you became, through union with Christ, as dead to sin as Christ Himself. And now, whenever conscience reminds you of your sins, you overcome the sense of condemnation, not by *directly* dealing with it, and so silencing it, but by looking away to Christ, and reckoning by faith that you died with Him in order to live with Him, and that therefore you are dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.¹ The sense of condemnation *must* give way to this faith, and make room to the peaceful and joyous sense of being freely justified by God in Christ.

But justification and sanctification are inseparably united. When Christ rose again from the dead, the Father showed that He was released from the penalty of sin by raising Him to a new life, full of power and glory, a life infinitely beyond the touch of sin and death. When you surrendered to Christ you were made a partaker of this life. You became a new creature. Since then you are enabled, in virtue of your union with the living Christ, to present yourself for service to God. This new relation between you and God has not been brought about by any effort of yours, but by your union with Christ. Though you cannot always *feel* this union, you can always *believe* it, and by faith reckon yourself as dead with Christ to sin, but alive with Christ to God.

¹ Rom. vi. 8.

And what have you to do when any sinful lust tempts you to yield to sin. You have not to fight it, in the usual sense of the word; you have not to deal with it *directly*, but, looking away to Christ, you are by faith to reckon yourself as dead to sin, but alive to God *in Christ*, and to present yourself unto God as made alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.¹ Here is not a word of fighting or arduous effort. You are only, by faith in Christ, to turn a deaf ear to the tempter, and at once to do the will of God. You are just to go on walking in the path of obedience, leaving the Spirit of God to deal with the lusts of the flesh. They will then drop off as a loose garment. Thus by faith you put off the lusts of sin, and put on the affections awakened by the Spirit.²

The master and the dead slave have no dealings any more with one another. As one who in Christ has died to sin, just, in the name of God, your new Master, say *no!* to the solicitations of the old master, and let God's Spirit in you deal with him, and he shall have no dominion over you. Reckon yourself to be dead to sin and made alive to God, and yield your members to God as instruments of righteousness.

By being in Christ, you are not under law, but under grace.³ When the man with the withered hand intrusted himself to Christ, he was not under

¹ Rom. vi. 13.

² Col. iii. 8, 12.

³ Rom. vi. 14.

law, but under grace. It was not law, but grace, which said to him, "Stretch out thy hand." Such commandments are enablings; so he stretched out his hand, not by fighting or struggling against his disease, but by reckoning Christ's power as his own. He reckoned his hand as being healed, and stretched it out as such.

Suppose some one approaching you of whom you know that he has made up his mind to annoy you. Should you prepare yourself to bear with him patiently, as one who prepares himself for the performance of a legal duty; then it is law speaking to you, "Be patient," and then you are sure to fail in your effort to obey the law. But look away from self to Christ; hear *His gracious* word, "Bear patiently with this man;" leave yourself in *His* hands, as one who is in Christ dead to sin and made alive to God; and you will receive the man kindly, and by the grace of God be made more than conqueror.

Suppose your troubles to increase: should you look upon the command "in nothing to be anxious"¹ as a legal duty, and thus in a legal spirit try to banish your anxious thoughts, then you will surely fail, and become a prey to despondent feelings. But reckon yourself as dead in Christ to the thoughts emanating from the flesh, and made alive in Christ to the suggestions awakened by the Spirit; act as one who is not under law but under grace; turn

¹ Phil. iv. 6.

away from every anxious thought; trust your heavenly Father; by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make known your requests to Him. And what will be the result? The life which is in Christ will abound in you; the peace of God which passeth all understanding will guard your heart and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.¹

Faith reckons to possess what it beholds not in self but in Christ. It looks away from both feeling and the want of feeling to Christ, in whom the believer is dead to sin and made alive to God. It is not by fighting sin, but by acting as one who reckons himself to be dead to it and made alive to God in Christ, that grace and not sin reigns in the believer. Whatever is sinful in you can only be overcome by your doing the opposite in obedience to Christ, who has made you a partaker of His life, and *by His power* works in you whatever He commands you to do. Should, for instance, unbelieving thoughts trouble you, do not fight them, but look away from them to Christ your *Saviour*, and at *His gracious* bidding, "Fear not, only believe;" believe as one who reckons himself to be made one with Christ. Yield to His Spirit in you, who is the Spirit of faith, and inspires you with faith.

It is not by directly attacking sin, but by thus putting on the shield of faith, that you are enabled

¹ Phil. iv. 6, 7.

to quench the fiery darts—the evil suggestions—of the wicked one.¹

You walk in Christ, not by anxious thought and painful struggle, but by “being stedfast in the faith.”² So you have to resist the devil.³ You do not keep yourself, but are “kept by the power of God through faith.”⁴ You are strong when you are “quiet and confident.”⁵ The source of your light and strength is not in yourself, but in God.⁶

Have abundant faith in Christ, whose death is your death, whose resurrection is your resurrection, whose life is your life. Look away from sin and self to Him “the Author and Perfecter of our faith.”⁷

¹ Eph. vi. 6.

² Col. ii. 5, 6.

³ 1 Pet. v. 9.

⁴ 1 Pet. i. 5.

⁶ Isa. xxx. 15.

⁶ Ps. xxvii. 1.

⁷ Heb. xii. 2.

XXVIII.

IN CHRIST.

“As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”—1 COR. xv. 22.

WHAT does the expression “*in Adam*” signify? It refers to man’s state of condemnation, as far as it is due to the condemnation which followed Adam’s transgression.

There is an intimate connection between Adam and the human race. Not only did all human life originate with him, but also man’s alienation from God, and condemnation by God. The law which thus binds us all together in Adam is called the law of solidarity. You meet with it wherever one’s condition is due to the merit or demerit of another, to whom he is legally or naturally united. Thus the wife is rich and honoured on account of her husband’s riches and respectability; and the drunkard’s child is poor and despised because his father is poor and disregarded.

It is due to Adam’s transgression that all men,

even innocent babes, are subject to death, and that all are born with a latent sense of misery.

To this law of solidarity we owe that men exist as families, as tribes, as nations, as one common humanity. Without this law men would exist as separate and isolated units, without a common history, a common feeling, a common character, binding together the several members of the family, of the nation, and of mankind. Then there would be separate histories of separate individuals, but not the common history of a tribe, of a nation, or of mankind. Then your relation to your forefathers would count as little as your relation to Adam, with regard to your present social or religious condition.

Whether we like it or not, there is no more patent law than the law of solidarity. There is no better proof of its existence than the indubitable fact that Adam's transgression has involved the whole human race in a state of guilt and condemnation.

Suppose each individual to be born as free from sin as Adam was when God created him, then no one would owe his state of condemnation to Adam's transgression, but only to his own individual sin; and then the law of solidarity would not have affected the history of sin. But it has pleased God that at the root of both man's condemnation and salvation we should meet with this law.—“As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

As you are alienated from God and condemned by Him on account of your vital union with Adam so you are delivered from sin on account of your vital union with Christ. As in Adam you are condemned to die, so in Christ you are released from death and restored to the favour of God.

Man has felt sin and death to be intruders in human history, and has longed to escape the sinner's doom by regaining the lost favour of God. For this purpose he tried by sacrifices and meritorious works to obtain pardon and restoration. But he failed. Suppose he had succeeded, then each saved individual would have secured his salvation by his own individual effort; and so there would have been no common salvation due to one person. The law of solidarity would then have been disregarded, and there would have been saved individuals existing independently of one another, but not a saved human race bound together by one common Saviour.

God most emphatically vindicated the law of solidarity in the manner in which He saved us. Christ became one with the human race, but not as every individual is one with it. Though Christ was one with it by reason of His human descent, yet He stood infinitely above it by His eternal descent from the Father. His incarnation was an infinite condescension. Adam, as head of the human race, in some measure typified Christ's unique position among men.¹

¹ Rom. v. 14.

And what did Christ accomplish? He, *the One*, regained God's lost favour for *the many*.¹ He submitted to man's common doom when He died; but being without sin He was released from it, and returned to glory as man's Representative, just as Adam had been doomed to become an exile from God, and to die as man's representative. And as all die on account of their union with Adam, so all who regain the lost life live on account of their union with Christ.

But mark, though in the manner both of our ruin and our restoration we see the same law of solidarity prevail by which "the many" owe their condition to "the One;"² yet the union between Christ and the saved is of an infinitely higher character than the union between Adam and condemned mankind. Adam sinned while ignorant of the law of solidarity, whereby his own ruin would entail the ruin of the whole human race. But Christ *chose* to become one with us, in order to work out our common redemption. And while Adam's descendants were involved in his ruin by a natural and unavoidable necessity, we owe our salvation to an infinitely higher law, to the divinest law conceivable. By His Spirit Christ reveals to us His *love*, and inspires us with *trust*, thereby creating between Him and us a bond of union which is similar to the bond which unites Him to His Father.

What a contrast this constitutes between your

¹ Rom. v. 17.

² Rom. v. 15.

past union with Adam and your present union with Christ! You were involved in Adam's ruin by the inevitable action of a natural law, which worked independently of both Adam's and your choice. But Christ, in His infinite love, chose to be made one with sinful mankind, and to die in order to annul the sentence of death. And while in glory, He by His Spirit stirs in you an irrepressible craving for salvation, reveals to you the love that moved Him to die for you, and awakens in you the trust needed to bind you to Him and make you a participator in His life and glory. There can be no more blessed union than that which is brought about by love on the one hand and trust on the other, even the love of the only-begotten Son of the Father, and the trust of the lost sinner in his divine Redeemer.

Who can complain of being ruined in Adam when thus saved in Christ? In deep humility we adore the wisdom of God, who in this wonderful manner has made the history of sin subservient to the manifestation of the hidden depths of His love.

"In Christ,"—what a mystery is revealed in this expression. You are in Christ as He is in God.¹ You are loved by Him as He is loved by the Father. You trust Him as He trusts the Father. You rest in Him as He rests in the Father.

When He was upon earth He showed what it was to be "in the Father" and to have "the Father

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 23.

in Him." His was a life of entire dependence upon the Father. It was nothing of self, and all of the Father. And as *He* was related to the *Father*, so *you* are related to *Him*, and through Him to the *Father*.¹ Let, therefore, your motto be, "Nothing of self, and all of Christ." Let your peace and joy and strength not be sought in what you are, or do, or feel; but let them be your permanent possession because Christ is yours and you are Christ's. Your emptiness is His, and His fulness is yours. *In Him* you are pardoned, accepted, beloved, guided, made fruitful, and prepared for glory.

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 21-23.

XXIX.

LIKE CHRIST.

“ Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”—Rom. vi. 4.

ONLY those who are *in Christ* can be enabled to *walk like Christ*. The Christian walk results from the life in which the believer participates with the risen Christ. Without this new life the Christ-like walk is a sheer impossibility.

There are those who extol the life of Christ for its beauty and sublimity, without acknowledging His relation to man as the Redeemer of the world. They imagine that they follow in His footsteps, and imitate His example. But they misunderstand and misconstrue His life altogether; eliminate the most marked features from His character; bring Him down to their own poor conceptions; and exchange the historical for an imaginary Christ. They do not worship Him as the incarnate Son of God, and know not that through union with Him His divine life is communicated to the believer. What a contrast

there is between the lives of these men and the lives of many poor and ignorant believers in Christ !

But you may be in Christ without walking like Christ. Of course, a spiritual observer will discern certain features in both your inward and outward life which are due to your being united to Christ, and which will be wanting in the life of every unbeliever. But for all that, you may live more like the world than like Christ. Though born again to a life like unto the life of Christ, yet you may not realize it. Though it is possible for you to become a thoroughly spiritual man, yet you may on the whole walk as a carnal man. It is not as by a natural necessity, as by the working of a physical law, that those who are in Christ walk like Christ. Though in Christ, yet you are tempted not to walk like Christ. And you may disobey the Word and the Spirit, and yield to the tempter. Thus many did in the days of the apostles, especially in the Corinthian and Galatian Churches, and were called by Paul carnal men.¹

Carnal believers, walking unlike Christ, may become spiritual believers, walking like Christ, by the *gradual* growth of the spiritual, to which the carnal *gradually* gives way. But often, perhaps in most cases, they pass from a life *unlike* Christ's life to a life *like* Christ's life by a *definite crisis*. The apostles were, when Christ was upon earth, very

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 3 ; Gal. v. 15, 16, 26.

unlike Him. They did not gradually grow into that likeness to Him which they afterwards showed in such a remarkable manner. Instead of rising higher, they seemed to sink ever lower and lower, until they reached that dark period in their lives when they forsook Christ and left Him to His fate. What a dissimilarity there was then between them and Christ ! While He rose to the highest display of faith in God and love to man, they were more powerless than ever to trust God and love man. They thus proved their unfitness to be the followers of Christ and the ministers of the gospel. But by the risen Christ they were at once lifted from this depth and raised to a level which hitherto had been infinitely beyond their reach ; and henceforth walked like Christ, full of trust in God and love to man, triumphing over all lower carnal motives, joyfully enduring the sufferings inflicted by the world's hatred, and ready to lay down their lives for their enemies.

May be, you too were led through a crisis from the life unlike that of Christ, to the life like that of Christ. Our spiritual life is an unbroken whole. Should God show you a single weak part which needs remedy, then the whole life suffers from weakness until that single weak part is healed. This has been your experience. God's spirit convicted you of unlikeness to Christ by reason of your love of this world. You courted its favour ; begged its honour ; dreaded its disapproval ; feared

its frown; avoided its opposition. Thus the flesh was allowed by you to dominate over the Spirit. You were carnal, not spiritual. You walked unlike, not like Christ. This alienated you from Him, and grieved the Spirit. You knew it. You felt it while drawing nigh to God. There was no liberty of access to Him. There was more darkness than light. Your very look betrayed your want of rest and joy in God. At last this condition became unbearable. You confessed to God your disloyalty to Him and Christ, and your disobedience to the Spirit; and abhorring yourself and despairing of self, you cast yourself upon Christ the mighty Saviour. Then He revealed Himself to you as the mighty One; raised you from the depth to which you had sunk; filled you with His Spirit; and enabled you henceforth to walk like Him.

Your unlikeness to Christ perhaps showed itself in another way. You could not bear your troubles patiently for lack of trust in God. If your troubles were brought about by your fellow-men, you hated them, and thought and said harsh things about them. God's Spirit showed you how by so doing you walked unlike Christ. This made you feel miserable. You could not bear the thought that you, who are called to be like Christ, were so much like the world. At last the moment came when trust in Christ enabled you to throw off the yoke of the flesh and follow in His footsteps.

May be, your evil temper made you walk unlike

the humble, the patient, the quiet, the silent Christ. None can tell what you had to suffer as the voice spoke ever more loudly in you, "Walk like the meek and lowly Christ." You could scarcely bear to face God and Christ in prayer. Oh, the burden that weighed you down! At last, in utter despair of self, you surrendered your temper to Christ, and He delivered you, and continues to deliver you day by day. You are now enabled to walk like Christ, where formerly the flesh dominated over you.

Perhaps you were enslaved to some selfish habit. You were a smoker or a drinker, and the voice of God in you plainly told you that you should, especially for the sake of others, abstain from these habits. As you sincerely desired to know God's will about this matter, the voice spoke ever louder and louder. With increasing clearness you saw what you had to do as a follower of the self-denying Christ. But the habit was too strong for you. You could not break the chain. And so you walked in the sight of God as a miserable captive, quite unlike Christ. This cast a gloom over your soul, hindered the flow of the Spirit, and led you at moments to deep despondency. At last the hour of your emancipation struck. Resolved to be a servant, not of the flesh, but of the Spirit, despairing of self and trusting Christ, you cast yourself upon Him, and were enabled to lay off a habit which seemed to have become one with your nature. You then experi-

enced, as never before in your life, the emancipating power of Christ. I remember the joy beaming in the face of a very godly young man, when he told me that after many vain struggles Christ had delivered him from one of the two habits I have mentioned—without a struggle he had long before thrown off the other. He will ever look back to the victory he gained as to a blessed crisis, a new starting-point, in his spiritual career.¹

God, in various ways, leads those to a Christ-like life who discover their dissimilarity to Christ, and have made up their minds, at whatever cost, to walk like Him. Such a walk, thank God, is a possibility to every believer; because in Christ our relation both to sin and to God is changed, according to the relation which the risen Redeemer sustains towards sin and towards God. “We are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also

¹ I cannot express my view on the two habits referred to better than in the words of Mr. John G. Paton, the apostolic missionary to the New Hebrides. He says (*Autobiography*, i. p. 63): “I would not be understood to regard the evils that flow from the use of tobacco as deserving to be mentioned in comparison with the unutterable woes and miseries of intemperance. To be protected, however, from suspicion and from evil, all the followers of Jesus should, in self-denial (how small!) and consecration to His service, be [pledged] abstainers from both of these selfish indulgences, which are no ornament to any character, and which can be no help in well-doing. Praise God for the many who are so pledged! Happy day for poor humanity when all the Lord’s people adopt this self-denying process for the good of the race!”

should walk in newness of life." The carnal can never change into the spiritual. Whatever, by its nature is unlike Christ cannot grow like Christ. The old man is to be buried, that the new man might rise from its grave.¹ The carnal lusts are to be treated as things put into the grave, and by communion with the risen Christ through the Spirit the new man, who is created after Christ, is to grow ever more like Christ.

As there is growth in the new man, so there will be growth in likeness to Christ. The disciples were more like Christ on the day of Pentecost than on the resurrection day when He breathed His Spirit—the Spirit of the new life—into them. And at the end of their lives they were more like Christ than on the day of Pentecost, when they were filled with the Spirit. Though we may be saved, *as far as we know*, from the dominion of the flesh, yet for several reasons our judgment is so warped, that we are apt to call that spiritual which is carnal, or to cultivate one feature of the spiritual character while overlooking another. There are many things which contribute to mature and perfect our likeness to Christ, such as our spiritual experiences, the trials of this present life, reading the biographies of eminent saints, fellowship with spiritual Christians to whatever Church they may belong, and, above all, the study of God's word, especially the apostolic writings.

¹ Rom. vi. 4, 6.

But, whatever our progress may be in a life like to that of Christ, we shall ever feel that there is much in us, while in the flesh, which makes us unlike Christ, and so the yearning desire to become like Him will grow in intensity.¹ At the same time, we shall rejoice exceedingly in the prospect that the day is approaching when, both in body and soul, we shall altogether be fashioned alike to the glorified Christ.²

¹ Phil. iii. 13, 14.

² Phil. iii. 21.

XXX.

CHRIST OUR PATTERN.

“We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”—2 COR. iii. 18.

As we have said before, we must be in Christ in order to walk like Christ. “Being in Christ” is the converse of “Christ being in us.” It results from it. “Christ being in us” makes it possible for Him, through His Spirit, to communicate His life to us, even as His Father’s life was communicated to Him by “His Father being in Him.” Knowing that such a life would be imparted to us by Him as was imparted to Him by His Father, He said, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”¹ This abundant life is seen in our Christ-like walk. Such a walk reveals the hidden indwelling of Christ in us, just as His God-like walk revealed the hidden indwelling of the Father in Him.

¹ John vii. 38, 39.

But in order to walk like Christ we need more than the indwelling Christ. We need His perfect example. He is to us both the source and the pattern of the life we have to live. His Spirit in us opens our eyes to behold the inexpressible glory of His unique life, awakens in us an ever deepening desire to walk in His footsteps, enables us to follow His example, and thus transforms us into His own image. While contemplating the life of Christ as the life of our Saviour and pattern, we are imperceptibly "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."¹

Let us adoringly look at the most prominent features of Christ's character, remembering that we are called to reflect them in our lives. Behold Him *implicitly obeying His Father*. His life, as He Himself declared, was one continuous fulfilment of the Father's command.² His will was always subject to the Father's will. He thought and spoke and acted as the Father willed. His obedience was tested in the wilderness and in Gethsemane, as never man's obedience was. But He triumphantly stood the test, though His obedience resulted in a death which was attended by a darkness which, for a time, cut Him off from blessed communion with God. What such a death meant for the righteous and holy Son of God, could be understood by none but Himself and His Father. Its foretaste in Gethsemane caused such an agony, that it seemed as if He was going to be

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

² John xii. 49.

crushed by it; and that He needed, besides the comfort obtained by intense and prolonged prayer, the help of an angel to regain the needed strength of body as well as of mind. Notwithstanding, He kept nothing back, but yielded His life at the Father's bidding. Through suffering His obedience was made perfect.¹ The Father demanded all, and He gave all—even the joy of fellowship with man, and, what was infinitely more valuable, the joy of fellowship with God.

See how He trusted the Father while obeying His will. Whatever He did, He did in entire dependence upon His Father. His dependence was as deep as He knew His Father to be near to Him. He declared that the Father was in Him, and He in the Father. He knew that the Father always heard Him.² When forsaken by all, He clung to His Father. When overtaken in Gethsemane by that unparalleled agony, He had recourse to God, as a child to his loving father. When condemned to die a criminal's death, He confidently looked up to His Father, and joyfully anticipated His exaltation to the Father's right hand.³ And when on the cross He for some time felt all comfort gone, He more than ever clung to God as the source of His life, and by faith overcame death, and died in perfect peace. Like His obedience, so His trust in God was both tried and perfected by suffering. Never man obeyed and trusted as He did.

Look at His love to man. His obedience and trust

¹ Heb. v. 8, 9.

² John xi. 42.

³ Matt. xxvi. 64.

manifested His love to *God* ; but how did He show His love to *man* ? By becoming incarnate for the sake of man, and bestowing the unutterable wealth of His life upon man. He taught the ignorant, helped the weak, uplifted the fallen, comforted those who mourned. He did it freely, for love's sake ; and persevered in this, though the men of position and influence disliked and hated and persecuted Him. Even to them He extended His love. He mourned and wept over their unbelief ;¹ and when dying the ignominious and painful death they inflicted upon Him, He prayed, "Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do." After His resurrection He bade His disciples tell them of His love, and call them to return to God, and to receive pardon *in His name*,—a pardon obtained for them through His mediation. While embracing both friends and enemies in His love, He lovingly thought of all the nations, and commissioned His disciples to carry the glad gospel news to the uttermost ends of the earth. A love so condescending and all-embracing had never been seen before. It was the full manifestation of the love of God. It proved Christ to be the Son, and, as such, the perfect image, of the Father and thus the perfect pattern for the redeemed.

It was due to His perfect love that He *perfectly identified Himself with sinful humanity*. We here touch upon a subject which utterly baffles our understanding. In His life we see Christ

¹ Luke xix. 41, 42 ; Matt. xxiii. 37.

forgetful of His unique position in the universe, while sympathizing with suffering and guilty and degraded man. Though alone perfectly sinless and holy among men, He sought the lost, and walked among them as if He was one of them. They marvelled at it. While looking up to Him with a reverence they could give to no other, they felt Him nearer to them than any other human being. They could trust Him more than any one. They could unbosom their sorrows to Him as to no one else. His love for them was infinitely deeper than the love of the best of mothers. When He saw them enslaved to sin, He felt as if *He* was enslaved to it. When He saw them bowed down by a sense of guilt, He felt as if *He* was guilty. By means of this divine sympathy He entered into their needs, and bore them before God, as no man could do. This sense of oneness with man in his lost condition was perfected when Christ, rather than escaping death, suffered, by dying, the penalty of human sin. None can tell what He feels for the sinner, since He on the cross suffered the sinner's doom. We here bend over an unfathomable abyss of divine sympathy. We are lost in its contemplation. We cannot understand it. But we can apprehend the truth, that on account of this infinitely perfect sympathy, Christ is worthy to be the great High Priest, continually making intercession for us with God.¹

¹ Heb. ii. 17, iv. 15, vii. 25.

What an example we have to follow ! If we were cast upon our own resources, we would be overcome by a sense of utter despair while contemplating this divine pattern. But all things are possible for them that believe. While trusting Christ, He will not fail to be our light and strength. He who worked in His apostles also works in every believer with quiet but mighty energy. Remember these words of Paul: "In whom (Christ) we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulation for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knee unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." ¹

¹ Eph. iii, 12-21.

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XXXI.

LED BY THE SPIRIT.

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God."— ROM. viii. 14.

It is the privilege of every son of God *to be led by the Spirit of God*. It is not a privilege added to your sonship, but essential to it. You cannot walk as a son of God without being led by the Spirit of God. Should God withdraw from you this privilege, He would annihilate your sonship. From the very moment of your adoption you are to enjoy the privilege of being led by the Spirit of God. And as the life of a son develops in you, you will ever better understand what this privilege means.

Being led by the Spirit, you are not conscious of *an outward power you are compelled to follow*. When God restrains the evil-doer by an influence he dislikes but dares not resist, he is not led by the Spirit of God. He feels that he is bound, against his will, by an outside power. There is an antagonism between his inclination and the power

he is forced to obey. Such, more or less, is the life of every one who is under law, and tries to obey God as his Lawgiver. The law compels him to obey God. It is an outside power, an outward restraint. He obeys as a slave. He is unhappy and miserable. His is the spirit of bondage and fear.¹ Those, however, who are led by the Spirit of God are delivered from this bondage; they are not slaves, but sons of God. God's Spirit, leading them, is not extraneous to their spirit. He is one with them, so fully, that you cannot say where the action of God's Spirit ends and the action of their spirit begins. The action of God's Spirit manifests itself in the action of their spirit, and the action of their spirit is born of the action of God's Spirit. The human and divine in them have become one, just as in Christ the human and divine were one—the human being the manifestation of the divine. For this reason the action of God's Spirit, while you are led by Him, is mostly quiet and imperceptible. You are aware of His action, only as you are aware of the action of your own spirit. He is not an agent outside your spirit and its functions.

Let me refer to your own experience. Since your adoption *you* see the love of the Father towards you; *you* perceive His nearness to you, as that of a father to his child; *your spirit* cries out, Abba, Father.² You do not say so as one who repeats a formula he does not understand, but you

¹ Rom. viii. 15,

² Rom. viii. 15,

express your own clear and deep conviction. Whence this new conviction? Whence this marvellous change? For there was a time when you knew God only as your Lawgiver and Judge, and dreaded His nearness. You ascribe this change to the indwelling Spirit of God. By dwelling in you He is so united with your spirit that His light has become your light, and, in a measure, *you* know God as *He* knows God. Under a sense of your dependence upon the Spirit of God you say that *He* cries, Abba, Father; and yet it is *your own* cry.¹ So, being led by the Spirit is not being compelled by an outward power. It is the natural and spontaneous manifestation of the life of a child of God.

Let me point you to another experience. When you served God while in bondage to law, you tried to cultivate joy and peace and long-suffering, and the other attributes of a son of God, by trying to obey the law which bids you lead such a life; but you failed miserably. It was what Paul calls a life after the flesh,² that is, a life man tries to live while depending upon his own resources. What a change came over you since you understood what it meant to trust God's indwelling Spirit for the life you are called to live as a son of God! Since then there are in you the joy and peace and long-suffering which you could not produce by your

¹ Gal. iv. 6; comp. with Rom. viii. 15.

² Rom. viii. 11, 12.

anxious efforts. Knowing that they are due to the Spirit of God, you call them *the fruit of the Spirit*.¹ *God's* Spirit dwells in you as the Spirit of joy and peace and long-suffering. And yet *your own spirit* is joyous, peaceful, and long-suffering. The divine has become human in you. The divine action is at the same time a human action, and that as natural and spontaneous as any action can be. Thus, while led by the Spirit, you are conscious that He does not work in you as a foreign power. It is all quiet. There is no antagonism or friction between the divine and the human will and impulse. So it was when, at Christ's bidding, the man stretched out his withered hand.

Take prayer. When you pray as a child of God, you owe it to the indwelling Spirit, and pray *in the Spirit*, and your unutterable groanings are the groanings of *the Spirit of God*.² Yet *your own spirit* prays and groans. The action of the Divine Spirit of prayer in you is known by the action of your own praying spirit.

What Paul meant by "being led by the Spirit," is the very same that is meant by "walking by the Spirit,"³ and walking as those "who are not under law, but under grace."⁴ He tells believers that by being led by the Spirit of God they are delivered from the spirit of bondage.⁵ This explains what you have to do in order to be led by the Spirit.

¹ Gal. v. 22.

² Eph. vi. 18 ; Rom. viii. 26.

³ Gal. v. 16.

⁴ Rom. vi. 14.

⁵ Rom. viii. 14, 15.

You have to trust the Spirit instead of self, and trustfully to obey His voice. By not so doing, you withdraw yourself from the Spirit's guidance, and become subject again to the flesh. You remember that this happened with the Galatians. God's Spirit can only lead those who trustfully and obediently yield to His persuasions. Though adopted as a son, you may lead, not a spiritual, but a carnal life. You may be contented with a carnal religion, be conformed to the world, and even wilfully sin. Remember the many warnings uttered by the apostles.

Because the action of the Spirit of God while leading us becomes, at the same time, the action of our own spirit, there is always danger of confounding the spiritual with the carnal. Young converts, especially, are apt to look upon what is carnal as spiritual. They need a humble mind, ready to listen to the instructions of more advanced Christians.

You may be led by God's Spirit as to the *matter*, while the *manner* is carnal. What you do may be right, while the spirit in which you do it may be wrong.

Never forget that as long as life lasts there is danger of grieving the Spirit and losing His guidance. There is no safety in your own spiritual advancement. Only those are safe who distrust themselves, and with docile and humble minds desire to be led by the Spirit. Remember Paul's

admonition, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, *considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*"¹

Do not look down upon believers who, with regard to certain practices, do not yield to the Spirit, as you have been enabled to do. Whatever you may have attained to is due solely to the grace of God. You are *not* led by the Spirit to despise others and regard yourself with self-complacency. While mourning over the backwardness of your fellow-believers in understanding and following the voice of the Spirit, cultivate a spirit of brotherly love, and patiently wait for the time when God's Spirit will prevail, and make all believers of one mind.²

There will be moments in your life when you will feel at a loss how to act, not knowing what God's Spirit suggests and whither He leads. If but you are willing to obey, not the flesh, but the Spirit, then restfully wait upon God. He is sure to make your path clear to you, either by some providential indication, or the counsel of a friend, or a word of Scripture, or an immediate suggestion by His Spirit. And should you, through ignorance, or inordinate haste, or even through a yielding to the flesh, have entered a wrong path, then be not discouraged. God's Spirit can make even your mistakes work together for your good.

¹ Gal. vi. 1.

² Phil. iii. 15, 16.

It is the highest of privileges to be made sons of God, and to be led as such by the Spirit of God. It is the most blessed of realities in this world, that the heavenly Father through the indwelling Spirit makes known His will to His children, enables them to walk in accordance with it, and assures them of His approving smile. Let us count this the best of treasures ; and, above all things, be careful to trust and obey the Spirit.

XXXII.

BAPTIZED WITH THE SPIRIT.

“John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.”—Acts i. 5.

No one can be led by the Spirit who is not baptized with the Spirit. To be baptized with the Spirit, means *to receive Him as the continual source of one's spiritual life*. You owe your spiritual life to Christ *through the indwelling Spirit*; and when He *enters* into your heart to dwell there for ever, you are said to be *baptized* with Him.

Thus the baptism with the Spirit *initiates* the Christian life. The Christian career *commences* with it. The divine life possessed before this is only preparatory to the Christian life. In view of this baptism with the Spirit, Christ speaks of the Spirit as *sent* to the believer, or as *coming upon him*.¹ Luke describes it as the Spirit's “*falling upon*,” or “*being poured out upon*,” or “*coming*

¹ John xv. 26; Acts i. 8.

upon" the believer.¹ Paul, in looking back to it, says that the Spirit was "*given to*," or "*poured out upon*," or "*received by*" the believer.²

Every believer was looked upon as a recipient of the Spirit, and as dwelt in by the Spirit. For this reason every one was exhorted to walk after the Spirit. Even the Galatians who had begun to walk, not after the Spirit, but after the flesh, were addressed as persons who had been baptized with the Spirit, and had not lost His indwelling. Believers are never told by the apostles to seek the baptism of the Spirit or to receive the Spirit. When Peter on the day of Pentecost assured those who surrendered to Christ that they would receive and thus be baptized with the Spirit, he meant that this gift would be theirs *at once*. And so it proved, for from that very day they commenced to walk after the Spirit. The divine act of baptizing with the Spirit is one with the divine act of justification, sanctification, and adoption. It is by the baptism with the Spirit that your spiritual connection with Adam ceases, and that you are implanted in Christ, and in Him justified, sanctified, and adopted.³ Could this baptism be annulled, the rest would be annulled likewise. It is through the baptism with the Spirit that you are made one with Christ.

The Spirit with which God baptizes the believer

¹ Acts viii. 16, x. 44, 45, xix. 6.

² Rom. v. 5, viii. 15 ; Titus iii. 5, 6.

³ Rom. vi. 3-6.

is looked upon, with regard to His operation, as *a source of power*. Remember the words of Christ, "I send the promise of my Father upon you ; but tarry ye in Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."¹ "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."² Referring to the Spirit's powerful operation, Paul speaks of his own striving according to the Spirit's working, *which worketh in Him mightily*.³ He says that God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, *according to the power that worketh in us*.⁴

How did believers manifest the power with which they were endued, since they were baptized with the Spirit? Some had extraordinary gifts, which, however, were not essential to the spiritual life. Among the Corinthians the spiritual life was on the decline at the very time when such gifts abounded. The special power of the Spirit was in the first place seen in the *spiritual* lives of those who were led by the Spirit. He was in them a source of such an abundant life as had never before been witnessed upon earth. In them was fulfilled the promise of Christ, that rivers of living waters would flow out of them who believe in Him.⁵

They were victorious over sin under the most trying circumstances. Take the Apostle Paul, for

¹ Luke xxiv. 49.

² Acts i. 8.

³ Col. ii. 29.

⁴ Eph. iii. 20.

⁵ John vii. 38, 39.

instance.¹ Before all the gifts with which he was endowed, he puts the grace of being patient under severe trials.² And so in other similar respects he was made by the grace of God an example to those to whom he preached the gospel.³ And thousands followed in his footsteps. They also reflected the life of Christ, and were lights shining in a dark world.⁴ They were a generation of holy men and women.⁵

Paul and Peter expected the believers to live, like themselves, victorious over the flesh, whatever the circumstances in which they were placed, just because they were all, like themselves, baptized with the Spirit. As they lived by the Spirit, they had to walk by the Spirit.⁶ Many of these men and women had, before this baptism, been the victims of sin in its most hideous manifestations.⁷ They came from the lower classes, were very ignorant, and lived in an impure and poisoned atmosphere. What a power, emanating from the indwelling Spirit, was manifested in the godly lives of such men and women!⁸

How victoriously they stood the opposition of the

¹ The extraordinary signs which *in some, not in all, cases* accompanied the baptism of the Spirit, were not the *essential manifestations* but the *attendant tokens* of the promised outpouring of the Spirit. God thereby announced the opening of the glorious dispensation for which age after age He had been preparing mankind.

² 2 Cor. vi. 4, xii. 12.

³ 1 Thess. ii. 10.

⁴ Phil. ii. 15, 16.

⁵ 1 Pet. ii. 9.

⁶ Gal. v. 24, 25.

⁷ Eph. ii. 1-6, v. 8-11; 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11.

⁸ Gal. v. 22.

world. They suffered shame, and even death, rather than conceal or deny the truth. They loved those that hated them, and prayed for their persecutors. They lived and died like Christ.

However, there were not a few who lost the power they had experienced for a time after they had been baptized with the Spirit. Such was the case with the Galatians, who had turned away from Christ to other things for help in their spiritual life. The Spirit was not withdrawn, but grieved, and prevented from operating in them as before. The result was that in various respects the flesh regained its lost ascendancy. There was for them no other way of deliverance, than returning to their former whole-hearted trust in Christ.

Others again seemed not to have been able at once to realize the full blessing flowing from the baptism with the Spirit. Such were the Corinthians, who were told by Paul that they were still carnal and not yet spiritual.¹ They had need of further teaching, and a mind humbly accepting what they were taught.

Are not most believers at the present time like these Corinthians? As believers they have been baptized with the Spirit. They owe their spiritual life to this baptism. Without it they would not be one with Christ. But, though believers, they know not that they are indwelt by the Spirit, and how they are to give free scope to the Spirit within

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 1-3.

them. They lead a languid spiritual life. They try in a wrong manner to improve their condition. They even despair of ever rising to a higher level.

We thank God that no believer, who sincerely desires to be delivered from his low life, needs despair. God knows how to quicken and revive the spiritual life, so as to become the powerful life it is destined to be. Some call these quickenings and revivings, fresh baptisms with the Spirit, or fresh outpourings of the Spirit. Do you feel the need of such a quickening; then ask the Lord to open your eyes to a right understanding of what His word says concerning this matter. Listen to the teaching of those whom God enables to instruct you. Join those who seek this blessing. Persevere. They that seek shall find.

Some time ago I received a letter from one of the surviving children of a Christian father, in which the following passage occurs: "He said to a friend, if it should please God to make him well again, he had much to tell Christians. He also told us, his children, that there was a higher Christian life, and that we had to strive after it, and to make up for what he had neglected." May it please the Lord to enable us, ere we die, both to see and to realize the higher possibilities of the Christian life. What a life it should be of faith and hope and love, resulting from the united action of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost!

XXXIII.

MORE ABOUT THE SPIRIT.

“Be filled with the Spirit.”—EPH. v. 18.

“He that stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God ; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”—2 COR. i. 21, 22. |

THE expression *filled with the Spirit* is not always used in the same sense. It sometimes describes a *permanent state*, sometimes a *passing experience*.

John the Baptist was *continually* filled with the Holy Spirit—that is, filled with the life born of the Spirit—from his earliest youth.¹ Since Christ was baptized with the Spirit, He was *always* full of the Spirit, that is, full of the higher life with which He was since then embued by the Spirit.² Since Christ’s ascension the life of His disciples was marked by a *permanent* joy in God,³ so that they may be said to have since then worshipped God as men who were, like John the Baptist, full of the Spirit.

¹ Luke i. 15.

² Luke iv. 1.

³ Luke xxiv. 53.

This state of mind rose to an ecstasy of joy when God's Spirit fell upon them on the day of pentecost. Luke describes this ecstatic state as a "being filled with the Spirit." It passed away when they ceased "to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance," and began to address their countrymen calmly in common everyday language. But they remained full of the Spirit—that is, full of the higher life with which, since that event, they had been blessed. When Luke says that Peter, when brought with John before the High Council, addressed the rulers, being filled with the Holy Spirit, he evidently refers to the elevated state of mind into which he was raised by the Spirit during this critical moment. He refers to a similar passing experience when he says that the company of believers, having been told what had happened, united in earnest supplication,¹ and while the place of gathering was shaken, were filled with the Holy Spirit. Though in both instances the particular sensation passed away, yet the impetus it gave to their spiritual life lasted as long as the conflict with the world continued.

You are always to be full of the Spirit by being full of the life born of the Spirit, though you should only on rare occasions pass through an experience which is fitly described as a being specially filled with the Spirit. Once only the believer is exhorted to be filled with the Spirit, and is shown how thus

¹ Acts iv. 31.

to get filled. In this instance it means, "Get filled with the social joy which comes from the Spirit, and contrasts with the carnal joy which the heathen seek in their friendly gatherings."¹ While the heathen have recourse to the stimulation caused by intoxicating wines, the believers should be stimulated by "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their heart to the Lord." Every gathering for Christian fellowship should be pervaded by the joyous spirit which is here described. To be filled with this holy joy is to be filled by the Spirit. The peculiar sensations awakened in such gatherings cannot be preserved while we are engaged in other pursuits, but they help to keep up the joyous tone which should always mark the believer.²

What means *the anointing with the Spirit*? God anointed men when He wanted them for some special service. Christ was pre-eminently God's Servant, destined for the weightiest of services. For this service He was anointed, that is, qualified, by the outpouring of the Spirit when He was baptized by John the Baptist.³ Since we are become one with Christ, we share both in His service and anointing. God uses us to show to others the way to Christ, as Christ was used to show us the way to God. Moreover, we are called to reflect the life of Christ as He was called to reflect the life of God. You

¹ Eph. v. 18, 19.

² Phil. iv. 4; 1 Thess. v. 16

³ Acts iv. 27, x. 38.

cannot conceive of a nobler service than this. It is infinitely beyond human conception and human ability. If Christ had not been the Son of God, living in union with the Father, He could not have been what He was, the Servant of God; nor could He have received that rich anointing with the Spirit.¹ Because in Christ we have become sons and daughters of God, we have also in Christ become the anointed servants of God.

Paul calls *every* believer an anointed one.² "Christ" means "Anointed," and so the word "Christian" should always remind us of our being the anointed followers of Christ. As our whole life is to be a life of service, as Christ's life was,³ so the anointing guarantees to us the grace needed to serve God as long as life lasts. It also guarantees any special anointing needed for any special service. Through the Spirit dwelling in us we are enabled to do anything to which the Master calls us. Yet these enablings must be sought by believing, earnest, and, at times, continued prayer. The Spirit qualifies us for our labours and struggles, not without our prayerful waiting upon God, and studying of God's Word. Christ was pre-eminently a man of prayer and a student of the word. The heart must be set on fire by prayer, and the fire must be fed by the word upon which you meditate.

Why are we said *to be sealed with the Spirit?*

¹ John iii. 34.

² 2 Cor. i. 21.

³ Matt. xx. 27, 28.

Because the indwelling Spirit marks us as God's children. He seals our adoption. Without Him we could not cry, Abba, Father. By exercising the filial life, through filial trust and obedience, we keep the filial spirit in healthy action, and shall not be troubled by doubts concerning our filial relation to God. The seal which marks us as God's children will be bright and shining. It is sure to become dim when we grieve the Spirit. Then we lose our joyous intercourse with God, and the joyous anticipation of our inheritance with the saints in glory.¹

*Of this inheritance the indwelling Spirit is the earnest.*² To be God's child is to be an heir of God, and co-heir with Christ. The Spirit of adoption as such assures us that finally the Father will gather us together with His Son in a state of glory, which He is now preparing for us.³ The indwelling Spirit directs our hearts to the future "manifestation of the sons of God," and enables us to "reckon the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward."⁴

What have we to do in order to be always full of the Spirit, living as God's anointed and sealed ones? Nothing but *walking by the Spirit*.⁵ God's is the filling and anointing and sealing. In Christ He *has* filled and anointed and sealed us. Let Christ be to us all and everything. Let us alto-

¹ Eph. iv. 30.

² Eph. i. 14.

³ Rom. viii. 16, 17.

⁴ Rom. viii. 18, 19.

⁵ Gal. v. 16.

gether despair of self and fully trust Christ. Let us give all and take all. This is "walking by the Spirit," and "not fulfilling the lust of the flesh,"¹ which always tempts us away from Christ, and stimulates us to trust self instead of Christ, or partly self and partly Christ. As we did not help Christ to die for us, so let us not help Him to live in us through the Spirit. As only by faith we were justified, so let us only by faith be sanctified. As we live only by the Spirit, so let us walk only by the Spirit. Let that life which we now live in the flesh be lived only by the faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.²

¹ Gal. v. 16.

² Gal. ii. 12.

XXXIV.

GOD'S GREAT PURPOSE.

“God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ ; (by grace ye are saved ;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus ; that in the ages to come *He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us* through Christ Jesus.”—
EPH. ii. 4-7.

God is glorious in the display of His creative presence in the world. To this the world owes its existence and preservation, and its manifold forms of beauty and grandeur. From every creature a voice goes forth, saying, “I am what I am, because God is my Creator.” All creation in a grand chorus, sings, “Glory to the powerful, wise, and beneficent Creator!” Whatever sin has done, it has not been able to banish God from creation, and efface the vestiges of His presence there. Notwithstanding all the disorganizing and destructive forces at work in nature, life and order and beauty prevail, and

make nature a divine cosmos.¹ Many a time you felt as one standing in the immediate presence of the glorious God, while under the spell of an object of beauty or grandeur in nature. You could not but adore and worship the Creator of heaven and earth.

From the pedestal of this divine glory by which creation is pervaded, there rises a higher divine glory—the glory God displays in His moral government. Man has become a rebel among God's creatures. Seduced by sin, he wished to become his own master. This, however, led to a most awful display of God's hatred of sin and love of righteousness. Think of the voice of conscience echoing the holy voice of the righteous God. Think of the terror which has filled and broken the stoutest hearts at the remembrance of even secretly committed sins. Think what has become of all national greatness which had not righteousness for its foundation. Think of the many personal and social evils following in the train of personal and social sins. Above all, think of the terrible experiences the Son of God had to go through when He identified Himself with the guilty sinner,—it was for a time as if hell had been opened and heaven closed to Him.

In view of this display of God's righteousness, we are thrilled with awe. Such a display is worthy of a holy God. The more we are enabled to enter

¹ Cosmos, "*beauty*," is the Greek for "*world*."

into its meaning, the higher God rises in our estimation. We cannot but fall prostrate before such a God, and tremblingly adore and worship Him.

But there is a still higher divine glory, transcending the glory of God's moral government as much as this transcends the glory of God's creative power. *It is the glory of God's redeeming grace.* His punitive righteousness opened to Him the way for the display of His redeeming mercy. Day was born from the womb of night. Light shone forth out of darkness. Upon Christ's descent into death's dark regions, followed His ascent to heaven, that He might deliver us from death, impart to us His life, and eventually associate us with Himself and His Father in eternal glory.

All this was done and is being done, not so much by power as by *love*. Love moved the Father to give His Son to die a propitiation for our sins. Love moved the Son to submit to this death. Love sends the Spirit in our hearts to regenerate us, to unite us to Christ, to dwell in us, and to prepare us for glory.

As the Son manifested to us the Father's love, so the Spirit interprets to us the love both of the Father and the Son. And as we understand this love, we are ourselves changed into its image; so that one common bond of love binds us to God and Christ and to one another. One love pulsates in God and the redeemed.

From this bond the angels are not shut out. Now we feel separated from them, as there is still a wall of partition between the visible and the invisible world; but the time is coming when the perishable shall make room for the imperishable, and heaven and earth shall become united under Christ their common Head.¹

None can tell what a display of divine grace is still in store for us; but what God has already done baffles description, and will for ever call forth our deepest adoration. Think of Christ's incarnation, life, and death, His resurrection, ascension, and exaltation at the right hand of the Father. Think of the countless numbers who have been saved under the most diverse circumstances, having the most diverse histories and characters. What a story of divine love they have each to tell! And how gloriously has God, for His love's sake, triumphed over human and satanic resistance, and provided the instruments needed for the purposes of His redeeming grace! When we contemplate these things, we are admitted to God's innermost sanctuary, behold the highest display of His glory, and rise to the highest act of worship.

There is something which gives a peculiar character to our contemplating and adoring God's supreme glory manifested by His redeeming grace: *He works out the purposes of His redeeming grace through the re-*

¹ Eph. i. 10.

*deemed.*¹ We are called to be God's co-labourers in saving the lost.² He raises us to the position of redeemed sons and daughters, and then sends us to our perishing brothers and sisters, that He might save them through us. While doing this, He makes us partakers of His love for them, and so enables us to understand the love which moved Him to save us.

What an honour, thus to become like God in His most adorable attribute—to love as He loves!³

And as we now share in His love and love's labour, so we shall share in His joy, when He shall behold the purposes of His love accomplished. Nay, even now we are permitted to rejoice with God, when we are made instrumental in saving sinners. God wants His children to be bound to Him, throughout all eternity, by the profoundest fellow-feeling.

The most precious bonds of mutual love and attachment, which will last for ever, are due to this labour of love to which the redeemed are called. Happy memories connected with this labour, and surviving this present life, will be in yonder world perennial fountains of joy.

An infinite world of bliss shall be due to the various ways in which the love of God is ever working out the purposes of God's redeeming grace.

¹ John xx. 21.

² 2 Cor. vi. 6.

³ Eph. v. 1, 2.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”¹

¹1 Cor. xiv. 58.

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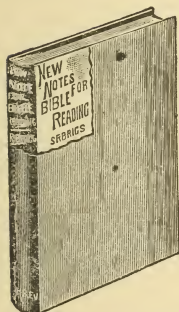
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